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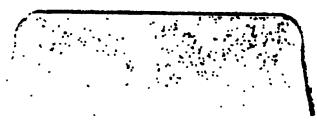
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# AFFORS CLAVIGERA.

LETTERS

*TO THE WORKMEN AND LABOURERS  
OF GREAT BRITAIN.*

BY

JOHN RUSKIN, LL.D.,

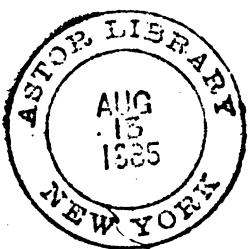
HONORARY STUDENT OF CHRIST CHURCH, AND SLADE PROFESSOR OF FINE ART.

VOL. VIII.



GEORGE ALLEN,  
SUNNYSIDE, ORPINGTON, KENT.  
1878-80-83-84.

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# FORS CLAVIGERA.

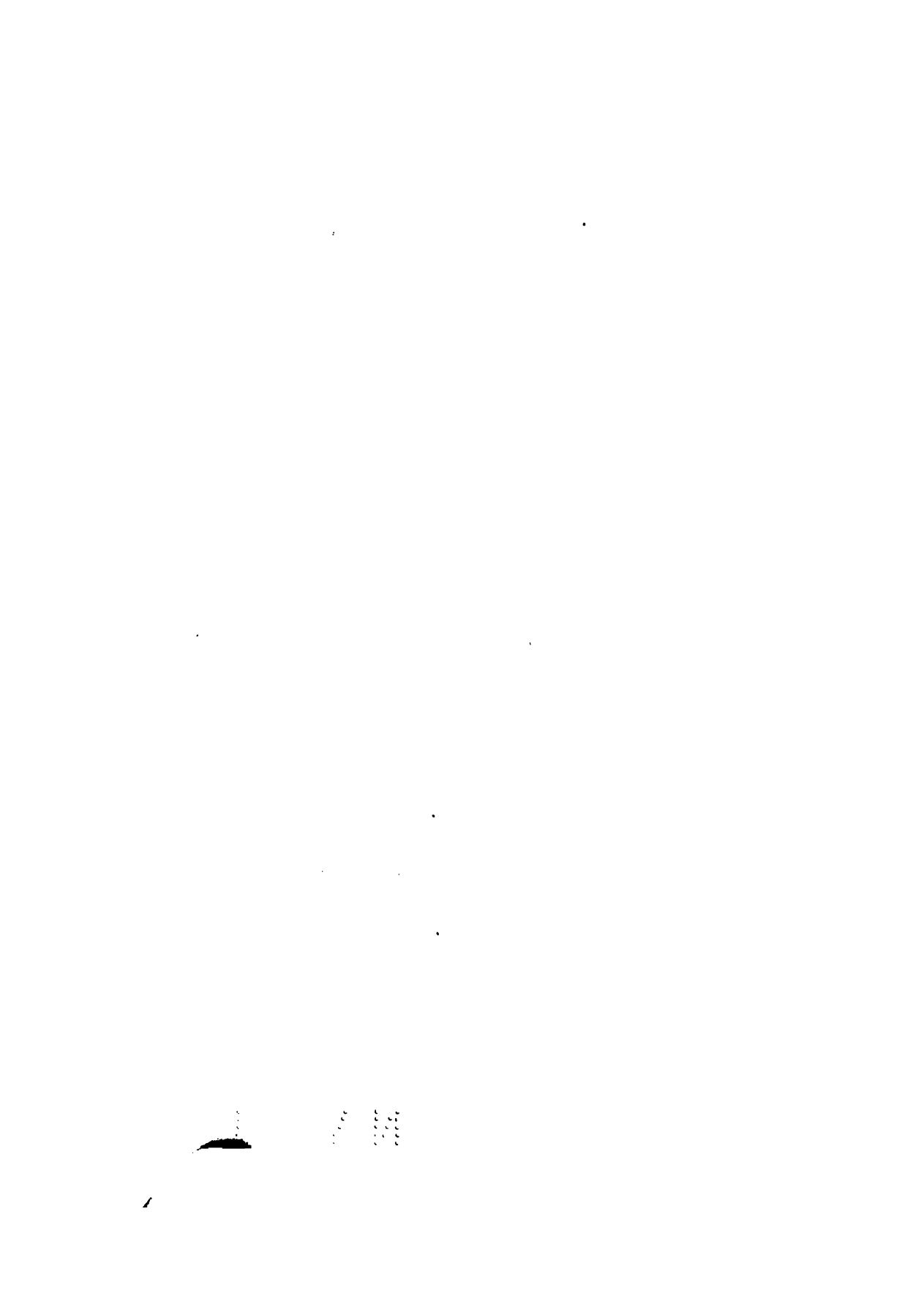
## SECOND SERIES.

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# FORS CLAVIGERA.

*SECOND SERIES.*

“YEA, THE WORK OF OUR HANDS, ESTABLISH THOU IT.”

## LETTER I.

THE series of letters which closed last year were always written, as from the first they were intended to be, on any matter which *chanced* to interest me, and in any humour which *chance* threw me into. By the adoption of the title ‘Fors,’ I meant (among other meanings) to indicate this desultory and accidental character of the work; and to imply, besides, my feeling, that, since I wrote wholly in the interests of others, it might justifiably be hoped that the chance to which I thus submitted myself would direct me better than any choice or method of my own.

So far as regards the subjects of this second series of letters, I shall retain my unfettered method, in reliance on the direction of better wisdom than mine. But in my former letters, I also allowed myself to write on each subject, whatever came into my mind,

wishing the reader, like a friend, to know exactly what my mind was. But as no candour will explain this to persons who have no feelings in common with me,—and as I think, by this time, enough has been shown to serve all purposes of such frankness, to those who can receive it,—henceforward, I shall endeavour to write, so far as I can judge, what may be serviceable to the reader, or acceptable by him; and only in some occasional and minor way, what may explain, or indulge, my own feelings.

Such change in my method of address is farther rendered necessary, because I perceive the address must be made to a wider circle of readers.

This book was begun in the limited effort to gather a society together for the cultivation of ground in a particular way ;—a society having this special business, and no concern with the other work of the world. But the book has now become a call to all whom it can reach, to choose between being honest or dishonest ; and if they choose to be honest, also to join together in a brotherhood separated, visibly and distinctly, from cheats and liars. And as I felt more and more led into this wider appeal, it has also been shown to me that, in this country of England, it must be made under obedience to the Angel of England ;—the Spirit which taught our fathers their Faith, and which is still striving with us in our Atheism. And since this was shown to me, I have taken all that I understand of

the Book which our fathers believed to be divine, not, as in former times, only to enforce, on those who still believed it, obedience to its orders; but indeed for help and guidance to the whole body of our society.

The exposition of this broader law mingling more and more frequently in my past letters with that of the narrow action of St. George's Guild for the present help of our British peasantry, has much obscured the simplicity of that present aim, and raised up crowds of collateral questions, in debate of which the reader becomes doubtful of the rightness of even what might otherwise have been willingly approved by him: while, to retard his consent yet farther, I am compelled, by the accidents of the time, to allege certain principles of work which only my own long study of the results of the Art of Man upon his mind enable me to know for surety; and these are peculiarly offensive in an epoch which has long made—not only all its Arts mercenary, but even those mercenary forms of them subordinate to yet more servile occupations.

For example; I might perhaps, with some success, have urged the purchase and cultivation of waste land, and the orderly and kinuiy distribution of the food produced upon it, had not this advice been coupled with the discussion of the nature of Rent, and the assertion of the God-forbidden guilt of that Usury, of which Rent is the fatallest form. And even if, in subtlety, I had withheld, or disguised, these deeper

underlying laws, I should still have alienated the greater number of my possible adherents by the refusal to employ steam machinery, which may well bear, to the minds of persons educated in the midst of such mechanism, the aspect of an artist's idle and unrealizable prejudice. And this all the more, because the greater number of business-men, finding that their own opinions have been adopted without reflection, yet being perfectly content with the opinions so acquired, naturally suppose that mine have been as confidently collected where they could be found with least pains:—with the farther equally rational conclusion, that the opinions they have thus accidentally picked up themselves are more valuable and better selected than the by no means obviously preferable faggot of mine.

And, indeed, the thoughts of a man who from his youth up, and during a life persistently literary, has never written a word either for money or for vanity, nor even in the careless incontinence of the instinct for self-expression, but resolutely spoken only to teach or to praise others, must necessarily be incomprehensible in an age when Christian preaching itself has become merely a polite and convenient profession,—when the most noble and living literary faculties, like those of Scott and Dickens, are perverted by the will of the multitude, and perish in the struggle for its gold; and when the conceit even of the gravest men of science provokes them to the competitive exhibition

of their conjectural ingenuity, in fields where argument is impossible, and respecting matters on which even certainty would be profitless.

I believe, therefore, that it will be satisfactory to not a few of my readers, and generally serviceable, if I reproduce, and reply to, a portion of a not unfriendly critique which, appearing in the 'Spectator' for 22nd September, 1877, sufficiently expressed this general notion of my work, necessarily held by men who are themselves writing and talking merely for profit or amusement, and have never taken the slightest pains to ascertain whether any single thing they say is true; nor are under any concern to know whether, after it has been sold in the permanent form of print, it will do harm or good to the buyer of it.

"MR. RUSKIN'S UNIQUE DOGMATISM.

"As we have often had occasion, if not exactly to remark, yet to imply, in what we have said of him, Mr. Ruskin is a very curious study. For simplicity, quaintness, and candour, his confidences to 'the workmen and labourers of Great Britain' in 'Fors Clavigera' are quite without example. For delicate irony of style, when he gets a subject that he fully understands, and intends to expose the ignorance, or, what is much worse, the affectation of knowledge which is not knowledge, of others, no man is his equal. But then as curious as anything else, in that strange medley of sparkling jewels, delicate spider-webs, and tangles of exquisite fronds which makes" (the writer should be on his guard against the letter *s* in future passages of this descriptive character) "up Mr. Ruskin's mind, is the high-handed arro-

gance which is so strangely blended with his imperious modesty, and that, too, often when it is most grotesque. It is not, indeed, his arrogance, but his modest self-knowledge which speaks, when he says in this new number of the 'Fors' that though there are thousands of men in England able to conduct the business affairs of his Society better than he can, 'I do not believe there is another man in England able to organize our elementary lessons in Natural History and Art. And I am therefore wholly occupied in examining the growth of *Anagallis tenella*, and completing some notes on St. George's Chapel at Venice.' And no doubt he is quite right. Probably no one could watch the growth of *Anagallis tenella* to equal purpose, and no one else could complete his notes on St. George's Chapel without spoiling them. We are equally sure that he is wise, when he tells his readers that he must entirely decline any manner of political action which might hinder him 'from drawing leaves and flowers.' But what does astonish us is the supreme confidence,—or say, rather, hurricane of dictatorial passion,—though we do not use the word 'passion' in the sense of anger or irritation, but in the higher sense of mental white-heat, which has no vexation in it, (a)—with which this humble student of leaves and flowers, of the *Anagallis tenella* and the beauties of St. George's Chapel at Venice, passes judgment on the whole structure of human society, from its earliest to its latest convolutions, and not only judgment, but the sweeping judgment of one who knows all its laws of structure and all its misshapen growths with a sort of assurance which Mr. Ruskin would certainly never feel in relation to the true form, or the distortions of the true form, of the most minute fibre of one of his favourite leaves or flowers. Curiously enough, the humble learner of Nature speaking through plants and trees,

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(a) I don't understand. Probably there is not another so much vexed person as I at present extant of his grave.

is the most absolute scorner of Nature speaking through the organization of great societies and centuries of social experience. (b) We know well what Mr. Ruskin would say,—that the difference is great between the growth that is without moral freedom and the growth which has been for century after century distorted by the reckless abuse of moral freedom. And we quite admit the radical difference. But what strikes us as so strange is that this central difficulty of all,—how much is really due to the structural growth of a great society, and quite independent of any voluntary abuse which might be amended by voluntary effort, and how much is due to the false direction of individual wills, *never strikes Mr. Ruskin as a difficulty at all.* (c) On the contrary, he generalizes in his sweeping way, on social tendencies which appear to be (d) far more deeply ingrained in the very structure of human life than the veins of a leaf in the structure of a plant, with a confidence with which he would never for a moment dream of generalizing as to the true and normal growth of a favourite plant. Thus he tells us in the last number of *Fors* that ‘*Fors Clavigera* is not in any way intended as counsel adapted to the present state of the public mind, but it is the assertor of the code of eternal laws which the public mind *must* eventually submit itself to, or die; and I have really no more to do with the manners, customs, feelings, or modified conditions of piety in the modern England, which I have to warn of the accelerated approach either of

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(b) It *would* be curious, and much more, if it only *were* so.

(c)—Italics mine.) On what grounds did the writer suppose this? When Dr. Christison analyzes a poison, and simply states his result, is it to be concluded he was struck by no difficulties in arriving at it, because he does not advise the public of his embarrassments?

(d) What does it matter what they *appear* to be?

Revolution or Destruction, than poor Jonah had with the qualifying amiabilities which might have been found in the Nineveh whose overthrow he was ordered to foretell in forty days.' But the curious part of the matter is that Mr. Ruskin, far from keeping to simple moral laws, denounces in the most vehement manner social arrangements which seem to most men (*e*) as little connected with them as they would have seemed to 'poor Jonah.' We are not aware, for instance, that Jonah denounced the use of machinery in Nineveh. Indeed, he seems to have availed himself of a ship, which is a great complication of machines, and to have 'paid his fare' from Joppa to Tyre, without supposing himself to have been accessory to anything evil in so doing. We are not aware, too, that Jonah held it to be wrong, as Mr. Ruskin holds it to be wrong, to charge for the use of a thing when you do not want to part with it altogether. These are practices which are so essentially interwoven alike with the most fundamental as also with the most superficial principles of social growth, that any one who assumes that they are rooted in moral evil is bound to be very careful to discriminate where the evil begins, and show that it can be avoided,—just as a naturalist who should reproach the trees on a hill-side for sloping away from the blast they have to meet, should certainly first ask himself how the trees are to avoid the blast, or how, if they cannot avoid it, they are to help so altering their growth as to accommodate themselves to it. But Mr. Ruskin, though in relation to nature he is a true naturalist, in relation to human nature has in him nothing at all of the human naturalist. It never occurs to him apparently that here, too, are innumerable principles of growth which are quite independent of the will of man, and that it becomes the highest moralist to study humbly where the influence of the

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(*e*) What does it matter what they 'seem to most men'?

human will begins and where it ends, instead of rashly and sweepingly condemning, as due to a perverted morality, what is in innumerable cases a mere inevitable result of social structure. (f)

"Consider only how curiously different in spirit is the humility with which the great student of the laws of beauty watches the growth of the *Anagallis tenella*, and that with which he watches the growth of the formation of human opinion. A correspondent had objected to him that he speaks so contemptuously of some of the most trusted leaders of English workmen, of Goldwin Smith, for instance, and of John Stuart Mill. Disciples of such leaders, the writer had said, 'are hurt and made angry, when names which they do not like are used of their leaders.' Mr. Ruskin's reply is quite a study in its way :—

'Well, my dear sir, I solemnly declare,' etc., down to 'ditches for ever.'—See *Fors*, September, 1877.

Now observe that here Mr. Ruskin, who would follow the lines of a gossamer-thread sparkling in the morning dew with reverent wonder and conscientious accuracy, arraigns, first, the tendency of man to express immature and tentative views of

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(f) To this somewhat lengthily metaphorical paragraph, the needful answer may be brief, and without metaphor. To every 'social structure' which has rendered either wide national crime or wide national folly 'inevitable'—ruin is also 'inevitable.' Which is all I have necessarily to say; and which has been by me, now, very sorrowfully,—enough said. Nevertheless, something more may be observed of England at this time,—namely, that she has no 'social structure' whatsoever; but is a mere heap of agonizing human maggots, scrambling and sprawling over each other for any manner of rotten eatable thing they can get a bite of.

passing events, (g) as if that were wholly due, not to a law of human nature, !! (h) but to those voluntary abuses of human freedom which might as effectually be arrested as murder or theft could be arrested by moral effort; next arraigns, if not the discovery of the printing-press (of which any one would suppose that he entertained a stern disapprobation), at least the inevitable (i) results of that discovery, precisely as he would arraign a general prevalence of positive vice; and last of all, that he actually claims the power, as an old littérateur, to discern at sight 'what is eternally good and vital, and to strike away from it pitilessly what is worthless and venomous.' On the first two heads, as it seems to us, Mr. Ruskin arraigns laws of nature as practically unchangeable as any by which the sap rises in the tree and the blossom forms upon the flower. On the last head, he assumes a tremendous power in relation to subjects very far removed from these which he has made his own,—"

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(g) I have never recognized any such tendency in persons moderately well educated. What is their education for—if it cannot prevent their expressing immature views about *anything*?

(h) I insert two notes of admiration. What 'law of human nature' shall we hear of next? If it cannot keep its thoughts in its mind, till they are digested,—I suppose we shall next hear it cannot keep its dinner in its stomach.

(i) There is nothing whatever of inevitable in the 'universal gabble of fools,' which is the lamentable fact I have alleged of the present times, whether they gabble with or without the help of printing-press. The power of saying a very foolish thing to a very large number of people at once, is of course a greater temptation to a foolish person than he was formerly liable to; but when the national mind, such as it is, becomes once aware of the mischief of all this, it is evitable enough—else there were an end to popular intelligence in the world.

—I have lost the next leaf of the article, and may as well, it seems to me, close my extract here, for I do not know what subject the writer conceives me to have made my own, if *not* the quality of literature! If I am ever allowed, by public estimate, to know anything whatever, it is—how to write. My knowledge of painting is entirely denied by ninety-nine out of a hundred painters of the day; but the literary men are great hypocrites if they don't really think me, as they profess to do, fairly up to my work in that line. And what would an old littérat<sup>eur</sup> be good for, if he did not know good writing from bad, and that without tasting more than a half page. And for the moral tendency of books—no such practised sagacity is needed to determine that. The sense, to a healthy mind, of being strengthened or enervated by reading, is just as definite and unmistakeable as the sense, to a healthy body, of being in fresh or foul air: and no more arrogance is involved in perceiving the stench, and forbidding the reading of an unwholesome book, than in a physician's ordering the windows to be opened in a sick room. There is no question whatever concerning these matters, with any person who honestly desires to be informed about them;—the real arrogance is only in expressing judgments, either of books or anything else, respecting which we have taken no trouble to be informed. Here is my friend of the 'Spectator,' for instance, commenting complacently on the vulgar gossip

about my opinions of machinery, without even taking the trouble to look at what I said, else he would have found that, instead of condemning machinery, there is the widest and most daring plan in *Fors* for the adaptation of tide-mills to the British coasts that has yet been dreamt of in engineering; and that, so far from condemning ships, half the physical education of British youth is proposed by *Fors* to be conducted in them.

What the contents of *Fors* really are, however, it is little wonder that even my most studious friends do not at present know, broken up as these materials have been into a mere moraine of separate and seemingly jointless stones, out of which I must now build such Cyclopean wall as I shall have time and strength for. Therefore, during some time at least, the main business of this second series of letters will be only the arrangement for use, and clearer illustration, of the scattered contents of the first.

And I cannot begin with a more important subject, or one of closer immediate interest, than that of the collection of rain, and management of streams. On this subject, I expect a series of papers from my friend Mr. Henry Willett, containing absolutely verified data: in the meantime I beg the reader to give his closest attention to the admirable statements by M. Violet-le-Duc, given from the new English translation of his book on Mont Blanc, in the seventh article of our

Correspondence. I have before had occasion to speak with extreme sorrow of the errors in the theoretical parts of this work : but its practical intelligence is admirable.

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Just in time, I get Mr. Willett's first sheet. His preface is too valuable to be given without some farther comment, but this following bit may serve us for this month :

"The increased frequency in modern days of upland floods appears to be due mainly to the increased want of the retention of the rainfall. Now it is true of all drainage matters that man has complete power over them at the beginning, where they are widely disseminated, and it is only when by the uniting ramifications over large areas a great accumulation is produced, that man becomes powerless to deal satisfactorily with it. Nothing ever is more senseless than the direct contravention of Nature's laws by the modern system of gathering together into one huge polluted stream the sewage of large towns. The waste and expense incurred, first in collecting, and then in attempting to separate and to apply to the land the drainage of large towns, seems a standing instance of the folly and perversity of human arrangements, and *it can only be accounted for by the interest which attaches to the spending of large sums of money.*" (Italics mine.)

"It may be desirable at some future time to revert to this part of the subject, and to suggest the natural, simple, and inexpensive alternative plan.

"To return to the question of floods caused by rainfall only. The first and completely remunerating expenditure should be for providing tanks of filtered water for human drinking, etc., and reservoirs for cattle and manufacturing purposes, in the upland valleys and moorland glens which form the great collecting grounds of all the water which is now wastefully permitted to flow either into underground crevices and natural reservoirs, that it may be pumped up again at an enormous waste of time, labour, and money, or neglectfully permitted to deluge the habitations of which the improper erection on sites liable to flooding has been allowed.

"To turn for a moment to the distress and incurred expense in summer from want of the very same water which has been wasted in winter, I will give three or four instances which have come under my own knowledge. In the summer of 1876 I was put on shore from a yacht a few miles west of Swanage Bay, in Dorsetshire, and then, walking to the nearest village, I wanted to hire a pony-chaise from the landlady of the only inn, but she was obliged absolutely to refuse me because the pony was already overworked by having to drag water for the cows a perpendicular distance of from two hundred to three hundred feet from the valley beneath. Hardly a rain-shoot, and no reservoir, could

be seen. A highly intelligent gentleman in Sussex, the year before, remarked, 'I should not regret the rain coming and spoiling the remainder of my harvest, as it would thereby put an end to the great expense I am at in drawing water from the river for my flock of sheep.' In the village of Farnborough, Kent, there are two wells: one at the Hall, 160 feet deep, and a public one at the north-west of the village. In summer a man gets a good living by carting the water for the poor people, charging 1*d.* for six gallons, and earning from 2*s.* 6*d.* to 3*s.* a day. One agricultural labourer pays 5*d.* a week for his family supply in summer. 'He could catch more off his own cottage, but the spouts are out of order, and the landlord won't put them right.' I know a farmer in Sussex who, having a seven-years' lease of some downland, at his own expense built a small tank which cost him £30. He told me at the end of his lease the farm would be worth £30 per annum more, because of the tank. The Earl of Chichester, who has most wisely and successfully grappled with the subject, says that £100 per annum is not an unfrequent expenditure by individual farmers for the carting of water in summer-time.

"In my next I will give, by his lordship's kind permission, a detailed account and plan of his admirable method of water supply, superseding wells and pumping."



## NOTES AND CORRESPONDENCE.

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### I. Affairs of the Company.

I never was less able to give any account of these, for the last month has been entirely occupied with work in Oxford; the Bank accounts cannot be in my hands till the year's end; the business at Abbeydale can in no wise be put on clear footing till our Guild is registered; and I have just been warned of some farther modifications needful in our memorandum for registry.

But I was completely convinced last year that, fit or unfit, I must take all these things in hand myself; and I do not think the leading article of our Correspondence will remain after the present month, so wholly unsatisfactory.

### II. Affairs of the Master. (12th December, 1877.)

Since I last gave definite statements of these, showing that in cash I had only some twelve thousand pounds left, the sale of Turner's drawings, out of the former collection of Mr. Munro, of Novar, took place; and I considered it my duty, for various reasons, to possess myself of Cænaruson Castle Leicester Abbey, and the Bridge of Narni; the purchase of which, with a minor acquisition or two besides, reduced my available cash, by my banker's account yesterday, to £10,223, that being the market value of my remaining £4000 Bank Stock. I have directed them to sell this stock, and buy

me £9000 New Threes instead; by which operation I at once lose about sixty pounds a year of interest, (in conformity with my views already enough expressed on that subject,) and I put a balance of something over £1500 in the Bank, to serve St. George and me till we can look about us a little.

Both the St. George's and my private account will henceforward be rendered by myself, with all clearness possible to me; but they will no longer be allowed to waste the space of Fors. They will be forwarded on separate sheets to the Companions, and be annually purchaseable by the public.

I further stated, in last year's letters, that at the close of 1877 I should present my Marylebone property to St. George for a Christmas gift, without interfering with Miss Octavia Hill's management of it. But this piece of business, like everything else I try to do just now, has its own hitches; the nature of which will be partly understood on reading some recent correspondence between Miss Hill and myself, which I trust may be closed, and in form presentable, next month. The transference of the property will take place all the same; but it will be seen to have become questionable how far Miss Hill may now consent to retain her control over the tenants.

III. We cannot begin the New Year under better auspices than are implied in the two following letters.

To MR. JOHN RUSKIN, LL.D.

"Honoured Sir,—I send ten shillings, which I beg you to accept as a gift for your St. George's Fund. The sum is small, but I have been thinking that as you are now bringing some plots of land into cultivation, that even so small a sum, if spent in the purchase of two or three apple or other fruit trees suitable to the locality, they might be pointed to, in a few years time,

to show what had been the result of a small sum, when wisely deposited in the Bank of Nature.

“Yours very Respectfully,

“A Garden Workman,

“This day 80 years old,

“JOSEPH STAPLETON.

“*November 28th, 1877.*”

(The apple-trees will be planted in Worcestershire, and kept separate note of.)

“CLOUGHTON MOOR, NEAR SCARBOROUGH,

*November 15, 1877.*

“Dear Master,—We have delayed answering your very kind letter, for which we were very grateful, thinking that soon we should be hearing again from Mr. Bagshawe, because we had a letter from him the same day that we got yours, asking for particulars of the agreement between myself and Dr. Rooke. I answered him by return of post, requesting him likewise to get the affair settled as soon as convenient; but we have not heard anything since. But we keep working away, and have got the house and some of the land a bit shapely. We are clearing, and intend enclosing, about sixteen hundred yards of what we think the most suitable and best land for a garden, and shall plant a few currant and gooseberry bushes in, I hope directly, if the weather keeps favourable. In wet weather we repair the cottage indoors, and all seems to go on very nicely. The children enjoy it very much, and so do we too, for you see we are altogether—‘father’s always at home.’ I shall never be afraid of being out of work again, there is so much to do; and I think it will pay, too. Of course it will be some time before it returns anything, excepting tired limbs, and the satisfaction that it is, and looks, better. We intend rearing poultry, and have a cow, perhaps, when we get something to grow to

eed them with ; and to that intent I purpose preparing stone this winter to build an outbuilding for them in the spring-time. I can do it all myself—the working part ; but should require help to purchase lime and timber, but not yet. We shall try our best to work and make our arrangements suit your views as far as we understand them, and anything you could like us to do, we shall be glad to perform.

“Yours truly,

“JOHN GUY.

“Our gross earnings for the year is £54 18s. 3½d. Our expenses this year have been heavy, with two removals, but we have a balance of £11 after paying tenth, for which we enclose Post Office order for £5 9s. 10d. We have plenty of clothing and shoes and fuel to serve us the winter through ; so Mary says we can do very well until spring.”

IV. The following important letters set the question raised about the Bishops' returns of income at rest. I need scarcely point out how desirable it would be for these matters to be put on so simple footing as to leave no ground for misapprehension by the common people. ‘Disingenuousness’ which the writer suspects in the ‘Humanitarian’ is not usually a fault of the lower orders ; nor do they ever fail in respect to a good and active clergyman.

“November 28, 1877.

“Dear Mr. Ruskin,—I see from the November Fors that you ask for further explanation of some figures published by a ‘Humanitarian,’ of Bishopwearmouth, touching the Bishops’ incomes of thirty-nine years ago. ‘The apparent discrepancy between the actual and alleged incomes’ is very easily explained. The larger figures are not, and are not said to be, the incomes of the Bishops at all. The estates were then let on ‘beneficial’ leases ; and the people who held these leases, generally country

squires, were the real owners of the lands, paying to the Bishops ancient nominal rents, and occasional lump sums ('fines'), when the leases were renewed. The big sums, therefore, are the estimated rental of the lands—that is, e.g., in the case of York the £41,030 represent the rents paid to the country gentlemen by their tenants, and the £13,798 is the average, one year with another, of what the squires paid to the Archbishop in rents and fines. The difference, of course, represents the value of the lands to the squires. What the figures really show, therefore, is the amount of Church property which, little by little, in the course of centuries, through a bad system of tenure, had got into the hands of laymen. This bad system has been long abolished, under the operation of divers laws passed in 1841, and later; and the Bishops have now, as your other table shows, much-reduced and unvarying income."

"It may help you to see how the proportions (in the case of different Bishops) of the Bishops' receipts to value of lands, vary so much, when I explain that the average episcopal income was required, in the forms issued by the Royal Commission, to be made out from the actual receipts of a specified period—seven years, I think.\* Now the separate leaseholds were of very various values, some big and some little, and it would often happen that several years elapsed without any big 'fine' falling in; and then there might come, in quick succession, the renewals of three or four very valuable estates, thus raising immensely the average for those particular years. Hence every Bishop's return, though accurately given as required, was a very rough average, though the return, taken as a whole—that is, as regards all the sees together—gave a fair view of the facts. The ins and outs of the affair, you see, can only be understood

\* The term had necessarily to be moderate, as it would have been useless to ask a Bishop as to the receipts of his predecessor.

by people familiar with the working of the now obsolete system. I therefore in my last note abstained from saying more than was just sufficient to indicate the blunder, or disingenuousness, of the pamphleteer, knowing that it would be useless to burden your pages with farther details. To any one who knows the facts, the large figures given as the *apparent* incomes of Bishops are simply ludicrous. No Bishop ever had any income approaching to £50,000. That of the late Bishop Sumner, of Winchester, was always quoted as exorbitantly vast, and it was about £19,000. I know privately that the late Archbishop of Canterbury, with his £15,000 a year, left his family the noble fortune of £600 per annum!"

V. "THE FATE OF CYFARTHFA.—Mr. Crawshay has put a summary end to all rumours as to the possibility of a start at Cyfarthfa. One of his old servants, says the 'Western Mail,' wrote to him lately on matters apart from the iron-works; but in the course of his letter he asked his old master whether there were any hopes of the works being again started. The reply from Mr. Crawshay was as follows: 'Trade is worse than ever it was, and I see not the slightest chance of Cyfarthfa starting again; and I believe if it ever does start it will be under different circumstances to the present, as it will require a large sum to be laid out in improvements, such as making steel-works, etc. I am too near my grave to think of doing anything of the sort; and I think so badly of trade altogether that I have no wish to see my sons remain in it. I am feeling very poorly, and do not think I can possibly live very long, and if I am able I shall sell the works before I die. There is nothing now to bind me to them, for I have been estranged from them by the conduct of the men. I always hoped and expected to die with the works going, and the same feeling among the men for their employers; but things

have changed, and all is different, and I go to my grave feeling I am a perfect stranger, as all my old men are gone, or nearly so.' "

"9, STEVENSON SQUARE, MANCHESTER,  
9th October, 1877.

"My dear Sir,—Could you have thought, did you expect, that such an utter vindication of your words would embody itself in this form?" "T. W. P."

"J. RUSKIN, Esq."

Yes, my friend, I not only expected, but knew positively that such vindication, not of my words only, but of the words of all the servants of God, from the beginning of days, would assuredly come, alike in this, and in other yet more terrible, forms. But it is to be noted that there are four quite distinct causes operating in the depression of English,—especially iron,—trade, of which two are our own fault; and the other two, being inevitable, should have been foreseen long since, by even the vulgar sagacity of self-interest.

The first great cause is the separation between masters and men, which is wholly the masters' fault, and the necessary result of the defiance of every moral law of human relation by modern political economy.

The second is the loss of custom, in consequence of bad work—also a result of the teaching of modern political economy.

The third, affecting especially the iron trade, is that the funds which the fools of Europe had at their disposal, with which to build iron bridges instead of wooden ones, put up spike railings instead of palings, and make machines in substitution for their arms and legs, are now in a great degree exhausted; and by the time the rails are all rusty, the bridges snapped, and the machines found to reap and thresh no more corn than arms did, the fools of Europe will have learned a

esson or two which will not be soon forgotten, even by *them*; and the iron trade will be slack enough, thereafter.

The fourth cause of trade depression,—bitter to the hearts of the persons whom Mr. Spencer Herbert calls patriots,—is, that the inhabitants of other countries have begun to perceive that they have got hands as well as we—and possibly, in some businesses, even better hands; and that they may just as well make their own wares as buy them of us. Which wholesome discovery of theirs will in due time mercifully put an end to the British ideal of life in the National Shop; and make it at last plain to the British mind that the cliffs of Dover were not constructed by Providence merely to be made a large counter.

VI. The following paper by Professor W. J. Beal is sent me by a correspondent from a New York journal. The reader is free to attach such weight to it as he thinks proper. The passage about the Canada thistle is very grand.

“Interest money is a heavy tax on many people of the United States. There is no other burden in the shape of money which weighs down like interest, unless it be money spent for intoxicating liquors. Men complain of high State taxes, of school-taxes, and taxes for bridges, sewers, (? grading,) and for building churches. For some of these they are able to see an equivalent, but for money paid as interest—for the use of money, few realize or gain (? guess) what it costs. It is an expensive luxury to pay for the mere privilege of handling what does not belong to you. People are likely to overestimate your wealth, and (make you?) pay more taxes than you ought to.

“In most parts of our new country, ten per cent. per annum, or more, is paid for the use of money. A shrewd business man may reasonably make it pay to live at this rate for a short time, but even such men often fail to make it profitable. It

is an uncommon thing for any business to pay a sure and safe return of ten per cent. for any length of time. The profits of great enterprises, like railroads, manufactories of iron, cloth, farm-implements, etc., etc., are so variable, so fluctuating, that it is difficult to tell their average profit, or the average profit of any one of them. We know it is not uncommon for railroads to go into the hands of a receiver, because they cannot pay the interest on their debts. Factories stop, and often go to decay, because they cannot pay running expenses. Often they cannot continue without losing money, to say nothing about the interest on the capital. Merchants seldom can pay ten per cent. on large amounts for any length of time. Even six per cent. is a heavy tax on any kind of business.

"But it was not of these classes that I intended to speak at this time. The writer has been most of his life among farmers, and has had unusual opportunities for studying their management of finances. It may be worse in a new country than in an old one, but so far as my knowledge extends, a large majority of the farms of Michigan are covered by a mortgage. The farmer needs capital to buy sheep, cattle, tools; to build houses and barns, and to clear and prepare land for crops. He is very likely to underestimate the cost of a farm, and what it takes to stock it properly. He invests all his money, and perhaps runs in debt, for his land alone, leaving nothing with which to furnish it. Quite often he buys more land before he has money to pay for it, or even before he has paid off the mortgage on his present farm. Times may be easy; crops may be good, and high in price, for a few years. He overestimates his ability to make money, and runs in debt. Fortune changes. He has 'bad luck,' and the debt grows larger instead of smaller.

"Farming is a safe business, but even this has its dark side. Good crops are by no means sure, even with good

culture. Blight, drought, insects, fire, sickness, and other calamities may come when least expected, and with a large debt overwhelm the hopeful farmer.

"I have never seen a farm that for several years together paid ten per cent. interest on the capital invested. In an old scrap-book I find the following: 'No blister draws sharper than does the interest. Of all industries, none is comparable to that of interest. It works all day and night, in fair weather and in foul. It has no sound in its footsteps, but travels fast. It gnaws at a man's substance with invisible teeth. It binds industry with its film, as a fly is bound in the spider's web. Debts roll a man over and over, binding him hand and foot, and letting him hang upon the fatal mesh until the long-legged interest devours him. There is but one thing on a farm like it, and that is the Canada thistle, which swarms with new plants every time you break its roots, whose blossoms are prolific, and every flower the father of a million seeds. Every leaf is an awl, every branch a spear, and every plant like a platoon of bayonets, and a field of them like an armed host. The whole plant is a torment and a vegetable curse. And yet, a farmer had better make his bed of Canada thistles than to be at ease upon interest.'

"There are some exceptions to the general rule, that no man should run in debt. It may be better for one to owe something on a house and lot than to move from house to house every year or so and pay a high rent. It may do for a farmer to incur a small debt on a new piece of land, or on some improvement, but be cautious. A small debt will sometimes stimulate to industry and economy, but a large one will often weary, and finally come off victorious.

"A farmer wishes to save his extra lot for his son, and so pays ten per cent. His sons and daughters cannot go to a good school or college because of that mortgage. The son sees the

privations of a farmer's life under unfavourable circumstances. The father dies, and leaves the farm to his son with a heavy debt on it, which he in vain attempts to remove, or he sells the farm and leaves that kind of drudgery. Very often a farmer is keeping more land than he is able to work or manage well. He does not know how to get value received, and more, out of his hired help. Such a one is unwise not to sell a part, clear the debt, and work the remainder better."

VII. The passage referred to in the text, from Mr. Bucknall's translation of M. Violet-le-Duc's essay on Mont Blanc:—

"But what is man in presence of the great phenomena which geology reveals? What can he do to utilize or to counteract their consequences? How can such diminutive beings, whose most numerous army would be barely noticed on the slopes of these mountains, in any degree modify the laws which govern the distribution of watercourses, alluvial deposits, denudations, and the accumulation and melting of snows on such vast mountain masses? Is not their impotence manifest?

"No; the most terrible and powerful phenomena of nature are only the result of the multiplication of infinitesimal appliances or forces. The blade of grass or the fibre of moss performs a scarcely appreciable function, but which, when multiplied, conducts to a result of considerable importance. The drop of water which penetrates by degrees into the fissures of the hardest rocks, when crystallized as the result of a lowering of the temperature, ultimately causes mountains to crumble. In Nature there are no insignificant appliances, or, rather, the action of nature is only the result of insignificant appliances. Man, therefore, can act in his turn, since these small means are not beyond the reach of his influence, and his intelligence enables him to calculate their effects. Yet owing to his neglect of the study of Nature—his parent and

great nurturer, and thus ignorant of her procedure, man is suddenly surprised by one of the phases of her incessant work, and sees his crops and habitations swept away by an inundation. Does he proceed to examine the cause of what he calls a cataclysm, but which is only the consequence of an accumulation of phenomena? No; he attributes it to Providence, restores his dykes, sows his fields, and rebuilds his dwellings; and then . . . . waits for the disaster—which is a consequence of laws he has neglected to study—to occur again. Is it not thus that things have been taking place for centuries?—while nature, subject to her own laws, is incessantly pursuing her work with an inflexible logical persistency. The periodical inundations which lay waste vast districts are only a consequence of the action of these laws; it is for us, therefore, to become acquainted with them, and to direct them to our advantage.

“We have seen in the preceding investigations that Nature had, at the epoch of the great glacial débâcles, contrived reservoirs at successive stages, in which the torrent waters deposited the materials of all dimensions that were brought down—first in the form of drift, whence sifting them, they caused them to descend lower down; the most bulky being deposited first, and the lightest, in the form of silt, being carried as far as the low plains. We have seen that, in filling up most of these reservoirs by the deposit of materials, the torrents tended to make their course more and more sinuous—to lengthen it, and thus to diminish the slopes, and consequently render their flow less rapid. We have seen that in the higher regions the torrents found points of rest—levels prepared by the disintegration of the slopes; and that from these levels they incessantly cause *débris* to be precipitated, which ultimately formed cones of dejection, often permeable, and at the base of which the waters, retarded in their course and filtered, spread in rivulets through the valleys.

“Not only have men misunderstood the laws of which

we mention here only certain salient points, but they have for the most part run counter to them, and have thus been paving the way for the most formidable disasters. Ascending the valleys, man has endeavoured to make the great laboratories of the mountains subservient to his requirements. To obtain pastures on the slopes, he has destroyed vast forests; to obtain fields suitable for agriculture in the valleys, he has embanked the torrents, or has obliterated their sinuosities, thus precipitating their course towards the lower regions; or, again, bringing the mud-charged waters into the marshes, he has dried up the latter by suppressing a great many accidental reserves. The mountaineer has had but one object in view—to get rid as quickly as possible of the waters with which he is too abundantly supplied, without concerning himself with what may happen in the lower grounds. Soon, however, he becomes himself the first victim of his imprudence or ignorance. The forests having been destroyed, avalanches have rolled down in enormous masses along the slopes. These periodical avalanches have swept down in their course the humus produced by large vegetable growths; and in place of the pastures which the mountaineer thought he was providing for his flocks, he has found nothing more than the denuded rock, allowing the water produced by rain or thawing to flow in a few moments down to the lower parts, which are then rapidly submerged and desolated. To obtain a few acres by drying up a marsh or a small lake, he has often lost double the space lower down in consequence of the more rapid discharge of pebbles and sand. As soon as vegetation has attempted to grow on the cones of dejection—the products of avalanches, and which consist entirely of *débris*—he will send his herds of goats there, which will destroy in a few hours the work of several years. At the terminal point of the elevated combes—where the winter causes the snows to accumulate—far from encouraging the larger vegetable growths,

which would mitigate the destructive effects of the avalanches, he has been in the habit of cutting down the trees, the approach to such points being easy, and the cones of dejection favouring the sliding down of the trunks into the valley.

"This destruction of the forests appears to entail consequences vastly more disastrous than are generally supposed. Forests protect forests, and the more the work of destruction advances, the more do they incline to abandon the altitudes in which they once flourished. At the present day, around the *massif* of Mont Blanc, the larch, which formerly grew vigorously at an elevation of six thousand feet, and marked the limit of the larger vegetable growths, is quitting those heights, leaving isolated witnesses in the shape of venerable trunks which are not replaced by young trees.

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"Having frequently entered into conversation with mountaineers on those elevated plateaux, I have taken occasion to explain to them these simple problems, to point out to them the foresight of nature and the improvidence of man, and to show how by trifling efforts it was easy to restore a small lake, to render a stream less rapid, and to stop the fall of materials in those terrible couloirs. They would listen attentively, and the next day would anticipate me in remarking, 'Here is a good place to make a reservoir. By moving a few large stones here, an avalanche might be arrested.'

"The herdsmen are the enemies of the forests; what they want is pasture. As far as they can, therefore, they destroy the forests, without suspecting that their destruction is sure to entail that of the greater part of the pastures.

"We saw in the last chapter that the lowering\* of the limit of the woods appear to be directly proportioned to the diminution of the glaciers; in fact, that the smaller the volume of the

\* 'Raising,' I think the author must have meant.

glaciers, the more do the forests approach the lower (? higher) regions. We have found stumps of enormous larches on the beds of the ancient glaciers that surmounted La Flégère, beneath the Aiguilles Pourries and the Aiguilles Rouges—*i.e.*, more than three hundred feet above the level of the modern Châlet de la Flégère, whereas at present the last trees are some yards below this hotel, and maintain but a feeble existence. These deserts are now covered only with stone *débris*, rhododendrons, and scanty pasturage. Even in summer, water is absent at many points, so that to supply their cattle the herdsmen of La Flégère have been obliged to conduct the waters of the Lacs Blancs into reservoirs by means of a small dike which follows the slopes of the ancient moraines. Yet the bottoms of the trough-shaped hollows are sheltered, and contain a thick layer of humus, so that it would appear easy, in spite of the altitude (6,600 feet), to raise larches there. But the larch is favoured by the neighbourhood of snows or ice. And on this plateau, whose summits reach an average of 8,500 feet, scarcely a few patches of snow are now to be seen in August.

“Formerly these ancient glacier beds were dotted with small tarns, which have been drained off for the most part by the herdsmen themselves, who hoped thus to gain a few square yards of pasture. Such tarns, frozen from October to May, preserve the snow and form small glaciers, while their number caused these solitudes to preserve permanent *nèvés*, which, covering the rocky beds, regarded their disintegration. It was then also that the larches, whose stumps still remain, covered the hollows and sheltered parts of the combes. The area of pasturage was evidently limited; but the pasturage itself was good, well watered, and could not be encroached upon. Now both tarns and *nèvés* have disappeared, and larches likewise, while we see inroads constantly made on the meadows by stony *débris* and sand.

"If care be not taken, the valley from Nant-Borant to Bonhomme, which still enjoys such fine pastures, protected by some remains of forests, will be invaded by *débris*; for these forests are already being cleared in consequence of a complete misunderstanding of the conditions imposed by the nature of the locality.

"Conifers would seem to have been created with a view to the purpose they serve on the slopes of the mountains. Their branches, which exhibit a constant verdure, arrest the snows, and are strongly enough attached to their trunk to enable them to support the load they have to carry. In winter we may see layers of snow eight inches or a foot thick on the palmated branches of the firs, yet which scarcely make them bend. Thus every fir is a shelf which receives the snow and hinders it from accumulating as a compact mass on the slopes. Under these conditions avalanches are impossible. When the thaws come, these small separate stores crumble successively into powder. The trunk of the conifer clings to the rocks by the help of its roots, which, like wide-spread talons, go far to seek their nourishment, binding together among them all the rolling stones. In fact, the conifer prefers a rock, settles on it, and envelopes it with its strong roots as with a net, which, stretching far and wide, go in search of neighbouring stones, and attach them to the first as if to prevent all chance of their slipping down.\* In the interstices *débris* of leaves and branches accumulate, and a humus is formed which retains the waters and promotes the growth of herbaceous vegetation.

"It is wonderful to see how, in a few years, slopes, composed of materials of all shapes, without any appearance of vegetation, become covered with thick and vigorous fir plantations—*i.e.*, if the goats do not tear off the young shoots, and if a little rest is left to the heaps on which they grow. Then the sterile

\* Compare the chapter on the offices of the Root, in 'Proserpina.'

ground is clothed, and if an avalanche occurs, it may prostrate some of the young trees and make itself a passage, but vegetation is eager to repair the damage. Does man ever aid in this work? No; he is its most dangerous enemy. Among these young conifers he sends his herds of goats, which in a few days make sad havoc, tear off the shoots, or hinder them from growing; moreover, he will cut down the slender trunks for firewood, whereas the great neighbouring forest would furnish him, in the shape of dead wood and fallen branches, with abundance of fuel.

"We have observed this struggle between man and vegetation for several years in succession. Sometimes, but rarely, the rising forest gains the victory, and, having reached a certain development, can defend itself. But most frequently it is atrophied, and presents a mass of stunted trunks, which an avalanche crushes and buries in a few moments.

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"Reservoirs in steps at successive heights are the only means for preventing the destructive effects of floods, for regulating the streams, and supplying the plains during the dry seasons. If, when Nature is left to herself, she gradually fills up those she had formed, she is incessantly forming fresh ones; but here man interferes and prevents the work. He is the first to suffer from his ignorance and cupidity; and what he considers his right to the possession of the soil is too often the cause of injury to his neighbours and to himself.

"Civilized nations are aware that in the towns they build it is necessary to institute sanitary regulations—that is, regulations for the public welfare, which are a restriction imposed on the absolute rights of property. These civilized nations have also established analogous regulations respecting highways, the water-courses in the plains, the chase, and fishing; but they have scarcely troubled themselves about mountain districts, *which*

*are the sources of all the wealth of the country ;* (Italics mine ; but the statement needs qualification.—J. R.) for where there are no mountains there are no rivers, consequently no cultivated lands ; nothing but *steppes*, furnishing, at best, pasturage for a few cattle distributed over immense areas.

“On the pretext that mountain regions are difficult of access, those among us who are entrusted by destiny, ambition, or ability, with the management of the national interests, find it easier to concern themselves with the plains than with the heights. (I don’t find any governments, nowadays, concerning themselves even with the *plains*, except as convenient fields for massacre.—J. R.)

“We allow that in those elevated solitudes Nature is inclement, and is stronger than we are ; but it so happens that an inconsiderable number of shepherds and poor ignorant mountaineers are free to do in those altitudes what their immediate interests suggest to them. What do those good people care about that which happens in the plains ? They have timber for which the sawmill is ready, and they fell it where the transport to that sawmill is least laborious. Is not the incline of the couloir formed expressly for sliding the trunks directly to the mill ?

“They have water in too great abundance, and they get rid of it as fast as they can. They have young fir-plants, of which the goats are fond ; and to make a cheese which they sell for fifty centimes, they destroy a hundred francs’ worth of timber, thereby exposing their slopes to be denuded of soil, and their own fields to be destroyed. They have infertile marshes, and they drain them by digging a ditch requiring two days’ work. These marshes were filled with accumulations of peat, which, like a sponge, retained a considerable quantity of water at the time of the melting of the snows. They dry up the turf for fuel, and the rock, being denuded, sends in a few minutes

into the torrents the water which that turf held in reserve for several weeks. Now and then an observer raises a cry of alarm, and calls attention to the reckless waste of territorial wealth. Who listens to what he says? who reads what he writes? (Punch read my notes on the inundations at Rome, and did his best to render them useless.—J. R.)

“Rigorously faithful to her laws, Nature does not carry up again the pebble which a traveller's foot has rolled down the slope—does not replant the forests which your thoughtless hands have cut down, when the naked rock appears, and the soil has been carried away by the melted snows and the rain—does not restore the meadow to the disappearance of whose soil our want of precaution has contributed. Far from comprehending the marvellous logic of these laws, you contravene their beneficent control, or at least impede their action. So much the worse for you, poor mortal! Do not, however, complain if your lowlands are devastated, and your habitations swept away; and do not vainly impute these disasters to a vengeance or a warning on the part of Providence. For these disasters are mainly owing to your ignorance, your prejudices, and your cupidity.”



# FORS CLAVIGERA.

*SECOND SERIES.*

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“YEA, THE WORK OF OUR HANDS, ESTABLISH THOU IT.”

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## LETTER II.

IN assuming that the English Bible may yet be made the rule of faith and conduct to the English people ; and in placing in the Sheffield Library, for its first volume, an MS. of that Bible in its perfect form, much more is of course accepted as the basis of our future education than the reader will find taken for the ground either of argument or appeal, in any of my writings on political economy previous to the year 1875. It may partly account for the want of success of those writings, that they pleaded for honesty without praise, and for charity without reward ;—that they entirely rejected, as any motive of moral action, the fear of future judgment ; and—taking St. Paul in his irony at his bitterest word,—“Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die,”—they merely expanded that worldly resolution into its just terms : “Yes, let us eat and drink”—what

else?—but let us *all* eat and drink, and not a few only, enjoining fast to the rest.

Nor do I, in the least item, now retract the assertion, so often made in my former works,\* that human probity and virtue are indeed entirely independent of any hope in futurity; and that it is precisely in accepting death as the end of all, and in laying down, on that sorrowful condition, his life for his friends, that the hero and patriot of all time has become the glory and safety of his country. The highest ideals of manhood given for types of conduct in ‘Unto this Last;’ and the assertions that the merchant and common labourer must be ready, in the discharge of their duty, to die rather than fail, assume nothing more than this; and all the proper laws of human society may be perfectly developed and obeyed, and must be so wherever such society is constituted with prudence, though none of them be sanctioned by any other Divinity than that of our own souls, nor their violation punished by any other penalty than perfect death. There is no reason that we should drink foul water in London, because we never hope to drink of the stream of the City of God; nor that we should spend most of our income in making machines for the slaughter of innocent nations, because we never expect to gather the leaves of the tree for their healing. . Without, therefore, ceasing to press the works of prudence even on Infidelity, and expect deeds and thoughts

\* Most carefully wrought out in the preface to the ‘Crown of Wild Olive.’

of honour even from Mortality, I yet take henceforward happier, if not nobler, ground of appeal, and write as a Christian to Christians ; that is to say, to persons who rejoice in the hope of a literal, personal, perpetual life, with a literal, personal, and eternal God.

To all readers holding such faith, I now appeal, urging them to confess Christ before men ; which they will find, on self-examination, they are most of them afraid to do.

For going to church is only a compliance with the fashion of the day ; not in the least a confession of Christ, but only the expression of a desire to be thought as respectable as other people. Staying to sacrament is usually not much more ; though it *may* become superstitious, and a mere service done to obtain dispensation from other services. Violent combativeness for particular sects, as Evangelical, Roman Catholic, High Church, Broad Church—or the like, is merely a form of party-egotism, and a defiance of Christ, not confession of Him.

But to confess Christ is, first, to behave righteously, truthfully, and continently ; and then, to separate ourselves from those who are manifestly or by profession rogues, liars, and fornicators. Which it is terribly difficult to do ; and which the Christian church has at present entirely ceased to attempt doing.

And, accordingly, beside me, as I write, to-day, (shortest day, 1877,) lies the on the whole honestest

journal of London,—‘Punch,’—with a moral piece of Christian art occupying two of its pages, representing the Turk in a human form, as a wounded and all but dying victim—surrounded by the Christian nations, under the forms of bear and vultures.

“This witness is true” as against themselves, namely, that hitherto the action of the Christian nation to the infidel has always been one of rapine, in the broad sense. The Turk *is* what he is because we—have been only Christians in name. And another witness is true, which is a very curious one; never, so far as I know, yet received from past history.

Wherever the Christian church, or any section of it, has indeed resolved to live a Christian life, and keep God’s laws in God’s name,—there, instantly, manifest approval of Heaven is given by accession of *worldly prosperity* and victory. This witness has only been unheard, because every sect of Christians refuses to believe that the religion of any other sect can be sincere, or accepted of Heaven: while the truth is that it does not matter a burnt stick’s end from the altar, in Heaven’s sight, whether you are Catholic or Protestant, Eastern, Western, Byzantine, or Norman, but only whether you are true. So that the moment Venice is true to St. Mark, her flag flies over all the Eastern islands; and the moment Florence is true to the Lady of Lilies, her flag flies over all the Apennines; and the moment Switzerland is true to Notre Dame des

Neiges, her pine-club beats down the Austrian lances ; and the moment England is true to her Protestant virtue, all the sea-winds ally themselves with her against the Armada : and though after-shame and infidel failure follow upon every nation, yet the glory of their great religious day remains unsullied, and in that, they live for ever.

This is the Temporal lesson of all history, and with that there is another Spiritual lesson,—namely, that in the ages of faith, conditions of prophecy and seer-ship exist, among the faithful nations, in painting and scripture, which are also immortal and divine ;—of which it has been my own special mission to speak for the most part of my life : but only of late I have understood completely the meaning of what had been taught me,—in beginning to learn somewhat more, of which I must not speak to-day ; Fors appointing that I should rather say final word respecting our present state of spiritual fellowship, exemplified in the strikes of our workmen, the misery that accompanies them, and the articles of our current literature thereupon.

The said current literature, on this subject, being almost entirely under the command of the Masters, has consisted chiefly in lectures on the guilt and folly of strikes, without in any wise addressing itself to point out to the men any other way of settling the question. “ You can’t have three shillings a day

in such times ; but we will give you two and sixpence : you had better take it—and, both on religious and commercial grounds, make no fuss. How much better is two-and-sixpence than nothing ! and if once the mill stop—think—where shall we be all then ? ” “ Yes,” the men answer, “ but if to-day we take two and sixpence, what is to hinder you, to-morrow, from observing to us that two shillings are better than nothing, and we had better take *that* sum on religious and commercial principles, without fuss ? And the day after, may not the same pious and moral instructors recommend to us the contented acceptance of eighteenpence ? A stand must clearly be made somewhere, and we choose to make it here, and now.”

The masters again have reason to rejoin : “ True, but if we give you three shillings to-day, how are we to know you will not stand for three and sixpence to-morrow, and for four shillings next week ? A stand must be made somewhere, and we choose to make it here, and now.”

What solution is there, then ? and of what use are any quantity of homilies either to man or master, on their manner of debate, that show them no possible solution in another way ? As things are at present, the quarrel can only be practically closed by imminence of starvation on one side, or of bankruptcy on the other : even so, closed only for a moment,—never ended, burning presently forth again, to sink silent only

in death ;—while, year after year, the agonies of conflict and truces of exhaustion produce, for reward of the total labour, and fiat of the total council, of the people, the minimum of gain for the maximum of misery.

Scattered up and down, through every page I have written on political economy for the last twenty years, the reader will find unfailing reference to a principle of solution in such dispute, which is rarely so much as named by other arbitrators ;—or if named, never believed in : yet, this being indeed the only principle of decision, the conscience of it, however repressed, stealthily modifies every arbitrative word.

The men are rebuked, in the magistral homilies, for their ingratitude in striking ! Then there must be a law of *Grace*, which at least the masters recognize. The men are mocked in the magistral homilies for their folly in striking. Then there must be a law of *Wisdom*, which at least the masters recognize.

Appeal to *these*, then, for their entire verdict, most virtuous masters, all-gracious and all-wise. These reprobate ones, graceless and senseless, cannot find their way for themselves ; you must guide them. That much I told you, years and years ago. You will have to do it, in spite of all your liberty-mongers. Masters, in fact, you must be ; not in name.

But, as yet blind ; and drivers—not leaders—of the blind, you must pull the beams out of your own eyes, now ; and that bravely. Preach your homily to your-

selves first. Let me hear once more how it runs, to the men. "Oh foolish and ungrateful ones," you say, "did we not once on a time give you high wages—even so high that you contentedly drank yourselves to death; and now, oh foolish and forgetful ones, that the time has come for us to give you low wages, will you not contentedly also starve yourselves to death?"

Alas, wolf-shepherds—this is St. George's word to you:—

"In your prosperity you gave these men high wages, not in any kindness to *them*, but in contention for business among yourselves. You allowed the men to spend their wage in drunkenness, and you boasted of that drunkenness by the mouth of your Chancellor of the Exchequer, and in the columns of your leading journal, as a principal sign of the country's prosperity. You have declared again and again, by vociferation of all your orators, that you have wealth so overflowing that you do not know what to do with it. These men who dug the wealth for you, now lie starving at the mouths of the hell-pits you made them dig; yea, their bones lie scattered at the grave's mouth, like as when one cutteth and cleaveth wood upon the earth. Your boasted wealth—where is it? Is the war between these and you, because you now mercilessly refuse them food, or because all your boasts of wealth were lies, and you have none to give?

"Your boasts of wealth *were* lies. You were working from hand to mouth in your best times ; now your work is stopped, and you have nothing in the country to pay for food with ; still less any store of food laid by. And how much distress and wrath you will have to bear before you learn the lesson of justice, God only knows. But this is the lesson you *have* to learn."

Every workman in any craft\* must pass his examination, (crucial, not competitive,) when he comes of age, and be then registered as capable of his profession ; those who cannot pass in the higher crafts being remitted to the lower, until they find their level. Then every registered workman must be employed where his work is needed—(You interrupt me to say that his work is needed nowhere ? Then, what do you want with machinery, if already you have more hands than enough, to do everything that needs to be done?)—by direction of the guild he belongs to, and paid by that guild his appointed wages, constant and unalterable by any chance or phenomenon whatsoever. His wages must be given him day by day, from the hour of his entering the guild, to the hour of his

\* Ultimately, as often before stated, every male child born in England must learn some manner of skilled work by which he may earn his bread. If afterwards his fellow-workers choose that he shall sing, or make speeches to them instead, and that they will give him his turnip a day, or somewhat more, for Parliamentary advice, at their pleasure be it. I heard on the 7th of January this year that many of the men in Wales were reduced to that literal nourishment. Compare *Fors*, Nov. 1871, page 6.

death, never raised, nor lowered, nor interrupted ; admitting, therefore, no temptation by covetousness, no wringing of anxiety, no doubt or fear of the future.

*That* is the literal fulfilment of what we are to pray for—"Give us each day—our daily *bread*," observe—not our daily money. For, that wages may be constant they must be in kind, not in money. So much bread, so much woollen cloth, or so much fuel, as the workman chooses ; or, in lieu of these, *if* he choose, the order for such quantity at the government stores ; order to be engraved, as he chooses, on gold, or silver, or paper : but the "penny" a day to be always and everywhere convertible, on the instant, into its known measure of bread, cloth, or fuel, and to be the standard, therefore, eternal and invariable, of all value of things, and wealth of men. That is the lesson you have to learn from St. George's lips, inevitably, against any quantity of shriek, whine, or sneer, from the swindler, the adulterator, and the fool. Whether St. George will let me teach it you before I die, is his business, not mine ; but as surely as *I* shall die, these words of his shall *not*.

And "to-day" (which is my own shield motto) I send to a London goldsmith, whose address was written for me (so Fors appointed it) by the Prince Leopold, with his own hand,—the weight of pure gold which I mean to be our golden standard, (defined by Fors, as I will explain in another place,) to be beaten to the

diameter of our old English "Angel," and to bear the image and superscriptions above told, (Fors, Oct. 1875, p. 287.)

And now, in due relation to this purpose of fixing the standard of bread, we continue our inquiry into the second part of the Deacon's service—in not only breaking bread, but also pouring wine, from house to house; that so making all food one sacrament, all Christian men may eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people, their Lord adding to their assembly daily such as shall be saved.

Read first this piece of a friend's recent letter:—

"My dear Mr. Ruskin,—In reading over again the December 'Fors,' I have been struck with your question quoted, 'They have no wine?' and the command is 'Fill the water-pots with WATER.' I am greatly averse to what is called improving, spiritualizing—*i.e.*, applying the sacred text in a manner other than the simple and literal one; but Christ's words had doubtless in them a germ of thoughtful wisdom applicable to other aims and ends besides the original circumstances; and it is a singular coincidence that Fors should have induced you to close your last year with your quotation from the Cana miracle, and that the next number should propose to deal with 'filling the water-pots (*cisterna*) with water.' One thing is certain, viz., that in many parts of the world, and even in England

in summer, the human obedience to the command precedent to the miracle would be impossible. Did you ever read Kingsley's Sermon on Cana? If you think it well to give a few of the extracts of him 'who being dead yet speaketh,' I shall be delighted to make them, and send them;\* they are different from what one hears in ordinary churches, and are *vital* for St. George."

"It is, I think in the first place, an important, as well as a pleasant thing, to know that the Lord's glory, as St. John says, was first shown forth at a wedding,—at a feast. Not by helping some great philosopher to think more deeply, or some great saint to perform more wonderful acts of holiness; but in giving the simple pleasure of wine to simple, commonplace people of whom we neither read that they were rich, nor righteous.

Though no one else cares for the poor, He cares for them. With their hearts He begins His work, even as He did in England sixty years ago, by the preaching of Whitfield and Wesley. Do you wish to know if anything is the Lord's work? See if it is a work among the poor.

But again, the Lord is a giver, and not a task-master. He does not demand from us: He gives to us. He had been giving from the foundation of the world. Corn and wine, rain and sunshine, and fruitful

\* From 'Sermons on National Subjects.' Parker and Son. 1860.

seasons had been His sending. And now He has come to show it. He has come to show men who it was who had been filling their heart with joy and gladness, who had been bringing out of the earth and air, by His unseen chemistry, the wine which maketh glad the heart of man.

In every grape that hangs upon the vine, water is changed into wine, as the sap ripens into rich juice. He had been doing that all along, in every vineyard and orchard ; and that was His glory. Now He was come to prove that ; to draw back the veil of custom and carnal sense, and manifest Himself. Men had seen the grapes ripen on the tree ; and they were tempted to say, as every one of us is tempted now, 'It is the sun, and the air, the nature of the vine and the nature of the climate, which make the wine.' Jesus comes and answers, 'Not so ; I make the wine ; I have been making it all along. The vines, the sun, the weather, are only my tools, wherewith I worked, turning rain and sap into wine : and I am greater than they. I made them ; I do not depend on them ; I can make wine from water without vines, or sunshine. Behold, and drink, and see my glory *without* the vineyard, since you had forgotten how to see it *in* the vineyard !'

We, as well as they, are in danger of forgetting who it is that sends us corn and wine, and fruitful seasons, love, and marriage, and all the blessings of this life.

We are now continually fancying that these outward earthly things, as we call them, in our shallow carnal conceits, have nothing to do with Jesus or His kingdom, but that we may compete, and scrape, even cheat, and lie, to get *them*,\* and when we have them, misuse them selfishly, as if they belonged to no one but ourselves, as if we had no duty to perform about them, as if we owed God no service for them.

And again, we are in danger of spiritual pride ; in danger of fancying that because we are religious, and have, or fancy we have, deep experiences, and beautiful thoughts about God and Christ, and our own souls ; therefore we can afford to despise those who do not know as much as ourselves ; to despise the common pleasures and petty sorrows of poor creatures, whose souls and bodies are grovelling in the dust, busied with the cares of this world, at their wits' end to get their daily bread ; to despise the merriment of young people, the play of children, and all those everyday happinesses which, though we may turn from them with a sneer, are precious in the sight of Him who made heaven and earth.

All such proud thoughts—all such contempt of those who do not seem as spiritual as we fancy ourselves—is evil.

See, in the epistle for the second Sunday after the

\* Italics mine. The whole sentence might well have them ; it is supremely important.

Epiphany, St. Paul makes no distinction between rich and poor. This epistle is joined with the gospel of that day to show us what ought to be the conduct of Christians who believe in the miracle of Cana; what men should do who believe that they have a Lord in heaven, by whose command suns shine, fruits ripen, men enjoy the blessings of harvest, of marriage, of the comforts which the heathen and the savage, as well as the Christian, man partake.

My friends, these commands are not to one class, but to all. Poor as well as rich may minister to others with earnestness, and condescend to those of low estate. Not a word in this whole epistle which does not apply equally to every rank, and sex, and age. Neither are these commands to each of us by ourselves, but to all of us together, as members of a family. If you will look through them, they are not things to be done to ourselves, but to our neighbours; not experiences to be felt about our own souls, but rules of conduct to our fellow-men. They are all different branches and flowers from that one root, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.’

Do we live thus, rich and poor? Can we look each other in the face this afternoon and say, each man to his neighbour, ‘I have behaved like a brother, to you. I have rejoiced at your good fortune, and grieved at your sorrow. I have preferred you to myself?’ ”

Seldom shall you read more accurate or more noble words. How is it that clergymen who can speak thus, do not see the need of gathering together, into one '*little*' flock, those who will obey them?

I close our *Fors* this month with Mr. Willett's admirable prefatory remarks on water-distribution, and a few words of his from a private letter received at the same time; noting only farther a point or two of my own mountain experience. When '*Punch*' threw what ridicule he could\* on my proposal to form field and glen reservoirs on the Apennines to stay the storm-waters; and, calculating ironically the quantity that fell per acre in an hour's storm, challenged me to stay it, he did not know that all had actually been done to the required extent by the engineers of three hundred years since, in the ravine above Agubbio, (the Agubbio of Dante's Oderigi)—their rampart standing, from cliff to cliff, unshaken, to this day; and he as little foresaw that precisely what I had required to be done to give constancy of sweet waters to the storm-blanchéd ravines of Italy, I should be called on

\* It is a grotesque example of the evil fortune which continually waits upon the best efforts for *essential* good made in this unlucky nineteenth century, that a journal usually so right in its judgment, and sympathetic in its temper, (I speak in entire seriousness,) and fearless besides in expressing both, (see, for instance, the splendid article on the Prince Christian's sport in the number for the 12th of this month,) should have taken the wrong side, and that merely for the sake of a jest, on the most important economical question in physics now at issue in the world!

in a few years more to prevent the mob of England from doing, that they may take them away from the fair pastures of the valley of St. John.

The only real difficulty in managing the mountain waters is when one cannot get hold of them,—when the limestones are so cavernous, or the sands so porous, that the surface drainage at once disappears, as on the marble flanks of hill above Lucca; but I am always amazed, myself, at the extreme docility of streams when they can be fairly caught and broken, like good horses, from their youth, and with a tender bridle-hand. I have been playing lately with a little one on my own rocks,—now as tame as Mrs. Buckland's leopard,\*—and all I have to complain of in its behaviour is, that when I set it to undermine or clear away rubbish, it takes a month to do what I expected it to finish with a morning's work on a wet day; and even that, not without perpetual encouragement, approbation, and assistance.

On the other hand, to my extreme discomfiture, I have entirely failed in inveigling the water to come down at all, when it chooses to stay on the hill-side in places where I don't want it: but I suppose modern scientific drainage can accomplish this, though in my rough way I can do nothing but peel the piece of pertinacious bog right off the rock,—so beneficently faithful are the great Powers of the Moss, and the

\* See 'The World,' January 9th of this year.

Earth, to their mountain duty of preserving, for man's comfort, the sources of the summer stream.

Now hear Mr. Willett.

"Three or four times every year the newspapers tell us of discomfort, suffering, disease, and death, caused by floods. Every summer, unnecessary sums are expended by farmers and labourers for water carted from a distance, to supply daily needs of man and beast. Outbreaks of fever from drinking polluted and infected water are of daily occurrence, causing torture and bereavement to thousands.

All these evils are traceable mainly to our wicked, wasteful, and ignorant *neglect*; all this while, money is idly accumulating in useless hoards; people able and willing to work are getting hungry for want of employment; and the wealth of agricultural produce of all kinds is greatly curtailed for want of a wise, systematic, and simple application of the *mutual law of supply and demand*\* in the storage of rain-water.

I can only now briefly introduce the subject, which if you consider it of sufficient importance I will follow up in future letters.

While the flooding of the districts south of the Thames at London is mainly owing to the contraction of the channel by the embankment, thereby causing

\* Somewhere, (I think in 'Munera Pulveris,') I illustrated the law of Supply and Demand in commerce, and the madness of leaving it to its natural consequences without interference, by the laws of drought and rain.

the flood-tide to form a sort of *bore*, or advancing tidal-wave, as in the Severn and Wye, the periodic winter floods near Oxford, and in all our upland valleys, are admittedly more frequent and more severe than formerly; and this *not* on account of the increased rainfall.\* The causes are to be found rather in—

- I. The destruction of woods, heaths, and moorlands.
- II. The paving and improved road-making in cities and towns.

\* On the Continent, however, there *has* been an increased rainfall in the plains, caused by the destruction of the woods on the mountains, and by the coldness of the summers, which cannot lift the clouds high enough to lay snow on the high summits. The following note by Mr. Willett on my queries on this matter in last *Fors*, will be found of extreme value: "I am delighted with 'Violet le Duc's' extracts. Yet is it not strange that he calls man 'impotent'? The same hands that can cut down the forests, can plant them; that can drain the morass, can dam up and form a lake; the same child that could lead the goats to crop off the young fir-tree shoots, could herd them away from them. I think you may have missed Le Duc's idea about lower glaciers causing higher forests, and vice versa. 'Forests collect snow, retard its rapid thaw, and its collection into denuding slides of snow by this lower temperature, and retards the melting of the glacier, which therefore grows—*i.e.*, accumulates—and pushes lower and lower down the valley. The reduction in temperature condenses more of the warm vapour, and favours growth of conifers, which gradually spread up so that destruction of forests in higher regions causes melting and retraction of glaciers.' I will send you shortly an old essay of mine in which the storage of water and the destructive avalanche were used as illustrating the right and wrong use of accumulated wealth. Lord Chichester's agent is at work with the plans and details for us, and you shall have them early in the new year (D.V.), and for it may I say—

'With patient mind, thy path of duty run:  
God nothing does, nor suffers to be done,  
But thou thyself wouldest do, if thou couldst see  
The end of all events as well as He.'"

III. The surface drainage of arable and pasture lands.

IV. The draining of morasses and fens ; and,

V. The straightening and embanking of rivers and water-courses.

All these operations have a tendency to *throw* the rainfall rapidly from higher to lower levels.

This wilful winter waste is followed by woeful summer want.

'The people perish for lack of knowledge.' The remedy is in our own hands.

Lord Beaconsfield once wisely said, 'Every cottage should have its porch, its oven, and its TANK.'

And every farm-house, farm-building, and every mansion, should have its reservoir; every village its series of reservoirs; and every town and city its multiplied series of reservoirs, at different levels, and for the separate storage of water for drinking, for washing, and for streets, and less important purposes.

I propose in my next to give more in detail the operation of the principles here hinted at, and to show from what has been done in a few isolated instances, what would follow from a wider and more general application of them."

## NOTES AND CORRESPONDENCE.

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### I. Affairs of the Guild.

I am happy to be able at last to state that the memorandum of our constitution, drawn up for us by Mr. Barber, and already published in the 55th number of the first series of *Fors*, has been approved by the Board of Trade, with some few, but imperative, modifications, to which I both respectfully and gladly submit, seeing them to be calculated in every way to increase both our own usefulness, and public confidence in us.

The organization of the Guild, thus modified, will be, by the time this letter is published, announced, as required by the Board, in the public journals; and, if not objected to on the ground of some unforeseen injuriousness to existing interests, ratified, I believe, during the current month, or at all events within a few weeks. I have prepared a brief abstract of our constitution and aims, to be issued with this letter, and sent generally in answer to inquiry.

I stated in my last letter that I meant to take our accounts into my own hands;—that is to say, while they will always be printed in their properly formal arrangement, as furnished by our kind accountants, Mr. Rydings and Mr. Walker, I shall also give my own abstract of them in the form most intelligible to myself, and I should think also to some of my readers. This abstract of mine will be the only one given in *Fors*: the detailed accounts will be sent only to the members of the

Guild. Until the registration of the Guild, I am still obliged to hold the Abbey Dale estate in my own name; and as we cannot appoint our new trustees till we are sure of our own official existence, I am obliged to order the payment of subscriptions to my own account at the Union Bank, to meet the calls of current expenses, for which I have no authority to draw on the account of the Guild but by cheque from its trustees.

I shall only farther in the present article acknowledge the sums I have myself received since the last statement of our accounts. The twenty days since the beginning of the year have melted into their long nights without sufficing for half the work they had been charged to do; and have had farther to meet claims of unexpected duty, not profitless to the Guild, assuredly; but leaving me still unable to give the somewhat lengthy explanations of our year's doings, without which our accounts would be unintelligible.

		<i>f s. d.</i>
	<i>Nov.</i>	
1.	Joseph Stapleton . . . . .	0 10 0
7.	Mr. Talbot (Tithe) . . . . .	100 0 0
15.	John Guy . . . . .	5 9 10
"	Frances M. Henderson . . . . .	3 3 0
"	Sale of Mr. Sillar's pamphlets on Usury . . .	0 17 0
	<i>Dec.</i>	
17.	Louisa A. Keighley . . . . .	5 0 0
28.	Helen J. Ormerod . . . . .	1 1 0
31.	Elizabeth Green . . . . .	0 10 9
	<i>1878.</i>	
	<i>Jan.</i>	
1.	Margaret Cox . . . . .	5 0 0
4.	R. B. Litchfield . . . . .	20 0 0
10.	William Hall . . . . .	2 2 0
20.	Ada Hartwell . . . . .	5 0 0
		<u>£148 13 7</u>

## II. Affairs of the Master.

The lengthy correspondence given in our last article leaves

me no farther space for talk of myself. People say I invite their attention to that subject too often: but I must have a long gossip in March.

## III.      "8, KINGSGATE STREET, WINCHESTER, 23rd Nov., 1877.

"Dear Sir,—If you will not help us, I do not know who will.

"One of the loveliest parts of the meadows close to the town is going to be entirely and irremediably spoiled: an engine-house is to be built, and all the drains are to be brought into a field in the middle of the Itchen valley, so that the buildings will be a blot in the landscape, an eyesore from every point, whether looking towards South Cross or back from thère to the Cathedral and College; or almost worse than these, from every hill round the town they will be the most conspicuous objects. I think you know the town; but do you know that this is its prettiest part? You can have some idea what it would be to have a spot which has been dear to you all your life, and which you see day by day in all its aspects, utterly ruined; and besides, it seems so wrong that this generation should spoil that which is not theirs, but in which none have really more than a life interest, but which God has given us to enjoy and to leave in its loveliness for those after us. I wish I could speak as strongly as I feel, if it would induce you to speak for us, or rather that I could show you the real need for speaking, as I know you would not keep silence for any but good reasons. Surely destroying beauty to save a little money is doing the devil's work, though I am told that it is wrong to say so.

"Yours respectfully and gratefully,

"A. H. W.

"There is another place where the works might be, where they could be planted out, and where the trees would be an

improvement; some engineers say that the soil too is better suited to the purpose. Do help us if you can! It is a haunting misery to me—both what we shall lose, and the sin of it."

Alas, my poor friend, no mortal can help you. England has bred up a race of doggish and vile persons, for the last fifty years. And they will do their doggish work, be sure of that, whatever you or I can say, until, verily, him that dieth of them the dogs shall eat.

IV. The following admirable letter is enough for its work, I have no room for the article it enclosed:—

“ARNOLD HOUSE, 16th Dec., 1877.

“My dear Mr. Ruskin,—It is very singular that the day after I wrote to you on the evils of drainage as adopted by modern engineers, such an article as the enclosed should appear in the ‘Times.’ The time must come when most of the expenditure on these drains will prove useless. But the evil continues, viz., of adding daily more streets to the present system, often choking the drains and converting them into stagnant elongated cesspools, ten times more injurious than the old ones, because of the risk of contagious and infectious germs being introduced from some house to multiply and infect a number. The remedy I think should be, 1st, to prevent additions to the present system; 2ndly, to enact that instead of fresh constructive works, bearing interest to be paid in rates, each house above a certain rental, say above £20 a year, shall be compelled to deodorize and remove its own sewage—*i.e.*, faecal matter in its original concentrated form; and that all smaller houses should be done by the municipality or local board, who should employ a staff of labourers to do it by districts, weekly, the material being very valuable to agriculturists if kept concentrated and deodorized by the charcoal of peat or of tan,

of sawdust, and of rubbish of all sorts. Labour of this kind would employ a great many now burdensome to the rates, unemployed; land would be fertilized instead of impoverished; and eventually perhaps districts now infested with drains that don't drain might be gradually won from the senseless system of accumulating streams, to the natural order of distribution and deposit under earth for fertilizing objects.

"Just as 'dirt is something in its wrong place,' so social evils are mainly wrong applications of right powers; nay, even sin itself is but the misuse of Divine gifts,—the use at wrong times and places of right instincts and powers.

"Pardon these scribblings; but when I see and feel deeply, I think perhaps if I put the thoughts on paper to you, they may perhaps take a better form, and be sown in places where they may take root and spring up and bear fruit to man's benefit, and therefore to the glory of the Great Father.

"Ever most faithfully and gratefully,

"HENRY WILLETT."

V. The following "word about the notice which appeared in last Fors about the Cyfarthfa Ironworks" deserves the reader's best attention; the writer's name and position, which I am not at liberty to give, being to me sufficient guarantee of its trustworthiness.

"Their owner has lately passed as a martyr to unreasonable demands from his workmen, in more than one publication. But what are the facts? Mr. Crawshay held himself aloof from the Ironmasters' combination which in 1873 locked out the workmen. When the works of the combined masters were reopened, it was upon an agreed reduction. Mr. Crawshay's workmen sent a deputation to him, offering to work on the terms agreed upon at the other works of the district; but Mr. Crawshay would not accede unless his men accepted *ten per cent. below* the rate that

was to be paid by his rivals in trade, and received by his men's fellow-workmen in the same town and district ! In a month or two the Associated Masters obtained another reduction of ten per cent. from their men. Mr. Crawshay's workmen waited upon him, and offered to go in at *these* new terms. But no : they must still accept ten per cent. below their neighbours, or be shut out. In another couple of months wages fell another ten per cent. Mr. Crawshay's men made the same offer, and met with the same rebuff. This was repeated, I think, a fourth time—(wages certainly fell forty per cent. in less than a twelve-month)—but Mr. Crawshay had nailed his colours to the mast for ten per cent. below anybody else.

"It is quite true, as Lord Aberdare says, that 'the Cyfarthfa Works are closed because the men would not work at the wages offered them.' But what else is true? The following :—

"1. The works presumably could have been worked at a profit, with wages at the same rate as was paid at rival works.

"2. The demand that his men should work at ten per cent. less wages than was given in the same market, was the unjustifiable act of an unscrupulous competition, and the heartless act of an unreasonable and selfish master.

"3. Had the men submitted to his terms, it would have been the immediate occasion of reducing the whole of their fellow-workmen in the Associated works. Hence,

"4. What has been called the unreasonable conduct of infatuated workmen, can be clearly traced to conduct on their masters' part flagrantly unreasonable ; and the stand they made was recommended alike by justice, by regard for the other employers, and by unselfish solicitude for their fellows in the trade.

"I may add—Had the men quietly submitted, the works would have run only a short time. Iron-workers are now suffering from one of those stages in the march of civilization

which always produces suffering to a few. Steel rails have supplanted iron rails, and capitalists who have not adopted their plant accordingly must needs stand. Some may perhaps feel that a great capitalist who, having amassed an enormous fortune, has neither built market, hall, fountain, or museum for the town where he made it, might be expected, at all events, to acknowledge his responsibility by adapting his works to meet the times, so that a little population of wealth producers might be kept in bread. However that may be, Cyfarthfa Works standing has no more to do with strikes and unreason of workmen than 'Tenterden steeple has to do with Goodwin Sands.' The ironworkers—poor creatures!—had nothing to do with putting the knife to their throats by helping Mr. Bessemer to his invention of cheap steel; but of course they have long since got the blame of the collapse of the iron trade. All the capitalists in all the journals have said so. They might exclaim with Trotty Veck, 'We must be born bad—that's how it is.'

VI. The following correspondence requires a few, and but a few, words of preliminary information.

For the last three or four years it has been matter of continually increasing surprise to me that I never received the smallest contribution to St. George's Fund from any friend or disciple of Miss Octavia Hill's.

I had originally calculated largely on the support I was likely to find among persons who had been satisfied with the result of the experiment made at Marylebone under my friend's superintendence. But this hope was utterly disappointed; and to my more acute astonishment, because Miss Hill was wont to reply to any more or less direct inquiries on the subject, with epistles proclaiming my faith, charity, and patience, in language so laudatory, that, on the last occasion of my receiving such answer, to a request for a general sketch of the Maryle-

bone work, it became impossible for me, in any human modesty, to print the reply.

The increasing mystery was suddenly cleared, a month or two ago, by a St. George's Companion of healthily sound and impatient temper, who informed me of a case known to herself, in which a man of great kindness of disposition, who was well inclined to give aid to St. George, had been diverted from such intention by hearing doubts expressed by Miss Hill of my ability to conduct any practical enterprise successfully.

I requested the lady who gave me this information to ascertain from Miss Hill herself what she had really said on the occasion in question. To her letter of inquiry, Miss Hill replied in the following terms :

"Madam,—In justice to Mr. Ruskin, I write to say that there has evidently been some misapprehension respecting my words.

"Excuse me if I add that beyond stating this fact I do not feel called upon to enter into correspondence with a stranger about my friend Mr. Ruskin, or to explain a private conversation of my own.

"I am, Madam, yours truly,

"OCTAVIA HILL."

Now it would have been very difficult for Miss Hill to have returned a reply less satisfactory to her correspondent, or more irritating to a temper like mine. For, in the first place, I considered it her bounden duty to enter into correspondence with all strangers whom she could possibly reach, concerning her friend Mr. Ruskin, and to say to *them*, what she was in the habit of saying to me : and, in the second place, I considered it entirely contrary to her duty to say anything of me in private conversation which she did not "feel called upon to explain" to whomsoever it interested. I wrote, therefore, at once myself to Miss Hill, requesting to know why she had not replied to

Mrs. ——'s question more explicitly : and received the following reply :—

“ 14, NOTTINGHAM PLACE, Oct. 7th, 1877.

“ My dear Mr. Ruskin,—I wrote instantly on receiving Mrs. ——'s letter to say that my words had been misunderstood. I could not enter with a stranger, and such a stranger !! (*a*) into anything more concerning a friend, or a private conversation.

“ But if *you* like to know anything I ever said, or thought, about you for the twenty-four years I have known you, ‘most explicitly’ shall you know ; and you will find no trace of any thought, much less word, that was not utterly loyal, and even reverently tender towards you” (my best thanks !—had I been more roughly handled, who knows what might have come of it?) “ Carlyle, who never saw me, told you I was faithful. Faithful—I should think so ! I could not be anything else. Ask those who have watched my life. I have not courted you by flattery ; I have not feigned agreement where I differed or did not understand ; I have not sought you among those I did not trust or respect ;” (thanks, again, in the name of my acquaintance generally,) “ I have not worried you with intrusive questions or letters. I have lived very far away from you, but has there been thought or deed of mine uncoloured by the influence of the early, the abiding, and the continuous teaching you gave me ? Have I not striven to carry out what you have taught in the place where I have been called to live ? Was there a moment when I would not have served you joyfully at any cost ? Ask those who know, if, when you have failed or pained me, (*b*) I have not

(*a*) I have no conception what Miss Hill meant by this admiring parenthesis, as she knew nothing whatever of the person who wrote to her, except her curiosity respecting *me*.

(*b*) I should have been glad to have known the occasions on which I did either, before being excused.

invariably said, if I said anything, that you might have good reasons of which I knew nothing, or might have difficulties I could not understand ; or that you had had so much sorrow in your life, that if it was easier to you to act thus or thus in ways affecting me, so far as I was concerned I was glad you should freely choose the easier. You have seen nothing of me ; (c) but ask those who have, whether for twenty-four years I have been capable of any treasonable thought or word about you. It matters *nothing* to me ; (d) but it is sad for you for babbling tongues to make you think any one who ought to know you, chattered, and chattered falsely, about you.

"I remember nothing of what I *said*, (e) but distinctly what I *thought*, and think, and will write that to you if you care. Or if you feel there is more that I can do to set the rumour at rest than the strong positive assertion I have made that I have been misunderstood, tell me. (f) But my own experience of character and of the world makes me *resolutely adhere to my belief* that though Mrs. —— would vastly *like* to get behind that, (g) that, and nothing else, is the right, true, and wise position as far as you and as far as I (h) am concerned. Shall I not leave it there, then ?

"I am sorry to write in pencil ; I hope you will not find it difficult to read. I am ill, and not able to be up.

(c) This statement appears to me a singular one ; and the rather that Miss Hill, in subsequent letters, implies, as I understand them, that she has seen a good deal of *me*.

(d) It seems to me that it ought, on the contrary, to matter much.

(e) I greatly regret, and somehow blame, this shortness of memory. The time is not a distant one,—seven or eight weeks. Anything I say, myself, earnestly, of my friends, I can remember for at least as many years.

(f) The only thing to be done, when people have been misunderstood, is to state what they said—which in this case Miss Hill has just declared impossible for her to do.

(g) She certainly would—and so should I.

(h) "As far as I"—am concerned, probably.

"I have tried to answer both points. First, to show that I *have* contradicted the statement, and that explanations of what I did say (*i*) (unless to yourself) seem to me most unwise and uncalled-for.

"And secondly, to assure you, so far as words will, that however inadequate you may feel the response the world has given, an old friend has not failed you in thought, nor intentionally, though she seems to have made a confusion, by some clumsy words. Hoping you may feel both things,

"I am, yours as always,

"OCTAVIA HILL."

To this letter I replied, that it was very pretty; but that I wanted to know, as far as possible, exactly what Miss Hill *had* said, or was in the habit of saying.

I received the following reply. The portions omitted are irrelevant to the matter in hand, but shall be supplied if Miss Hill wishes.

"14, NOTTINGHAM PLACE, W., Nov. 3rd, 1877.

"Dear Mr. Ruskin,—I offered immediately, on October 6th, on receiving your first letter, to tell you anything I had ever said about you. Whatever needed explanation seemed to me best said to you.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I have spoken to you, I think, and certainly to others, of what appears to me an incapacity in you for management of great practical work,—due, in my opinion, partly to an ideal standard of perfection, which finds it hard to accept *any* limitations in perfection, even temporarily; partly to a strange power

(*i*) Partly remembered then? but with a vague sense of danger in explaining the same, except to myself! I do not think the *explanation* would have been 'unwise,' as it was certainly not 'uncalled-for.' But I suspect the sayings *themselves* to have been both.

of gathering round you, and trusting, the wrong people, which I never could understand in you, as it mingles so strangely with rare powers of perception of character, and which always seemed to me therefore rather a deliberate ignoring of disqualifications, in hope that that would stimulate to better action, but which hope was not realized.

"In Mr. —'s case, and so far as I can recollect in every case in which I have spoken of this, it has been when I have found people puzzled themselves by not finding they can take you as a practical guide in their own lives, yet feeling that you must mean practical result to follow on your teaching, and inclined to think you cannot help them. Mr. — and I were great friends: when I was a girl, and he a young man, we read and talked over your books together. I had not seen him for many years till he asked me to come and see him and his wife and children. He is a manufacturer, face to face with difficult problems, full of desire to do right, with memories of ideals and resolutions, building his house, managing his mills, with a distinct desire to do well. I found him inclined to think perhaps after all he had been wrong, and that you could teach him nothing, because he could not apply your definite directions to his own life. The object of my words was just this: 'Oh, do not think so. All the nobility of standard and aim, all the conscience and clear sight of right principles, is there, and means distinct action. Do not look to Mr. Ruskin for definite direction about practical things: he is not the best judge of them. You, near to the necessities of this tangible world and of action, must make your own life, and apply principles to it. Necessity is God's, rightly estimated, and cannot be inconsistent with right. But listen to the teacher who sees nearer to perfection than almost any of us: never lose sight or memory of what he sets before you, and resolutely apply it, cost what it may, to your own life.'

"I do think you most incapable of carrying out any great practical scheme. I do not the less think you have influenced, and will influence, action deeply and rightly.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I have never said, or implied, that I was unable to answer any question. I did think, and do think, the explanation of what I might have said, *except to yourself*, likely to do you more harm than good; partly because I do strongly think, and cannot be sure that I might not have said, that I do feel you to have a certain incapacity for practical work; and all the other side it is difficult for the world to see. It is different to say it to a friend who reverences you, and one says more completely what one means. I was glad when you said, 'Let the thing be while you are ill.' God knows I am ill, but remember your proposal to leave it was in answer to one offering to tell you all. And I never have to any other single creature made my health any reason whatsoever for not answering any question, or fulfilling indeed any other duty of my not very easy life. Clearly, some one has received an impression from what I said to Mr. ——, very different from what I had intended to convey, but he seemed in tune with your spirit and mine towards you when I spoke.

"For any pain my action may have given you, I earnestly desire to apologize—yes, to ask you to forgive me. I never wronged or injured you or your work in thought or word intentionally; and I am, whatever you may think, or seem to say,

"Faithfully yours,

"OCTAVIA HILL."

To this letter I replied as follows:—

"BRANTWOOD, November 4, 1877.

"My dear Octavia,—I am glad to have at last your letter, though it was to Mrs. ——, and not to me, that it ought at once

to have been addressed, without forcing me to all the trouble of getting at it. Your opinions of me are perhaps of little moment to *me*, but of immense moment to others. But for this particular opinion, that I trust the wrong people, I wish you to give me *two* sufficient examples of the error you have imagined. You yourself will be a notable third; and at the mouth of two or three witnesses, the word will be established.

"But as I have never yet, to my own knowledge, 'trusted' any one who has failed me, *except* yourself, and one other person of whom I do not suppose you are thinking, I shall be greatly instructed if you will give me the two instances I ask for. I never *trusted* even my father's man of business; but took my father's word as the wisest I could get. And I know not a single piece of business I have ever undertaken, which has failed by the fault of any person chosen by me to conduct it.

"Tell me, therefore, of two at least. Then I will request one or two more things of you; being always

"Affectionately yours,

"J. R.

"P.S.—Of all injuries you could have done—not me—but the cause I have in hand, the giving the slightest countenance to the vulgar mob's cry of 'unpractical' was the fatallest."

The reader may perhaps, at first, think this reply to Miss Hill's sentimental letter somewhat hard. He will see by the following answer that I knew the ground:—

"14, NOTTINGHAM PLACE, W., Nov. 5, 1877.

"Dear Mr. Ruskin,—You say that I am a notable instance of your having trusted the wrong people. Whether you have been right hitherto, or are right now, the instance is equally one of failure to understand character. It is the only one I have a right to give. I absolutely refuse to give other instances,

or to discuss the characters of third parties. My opinion of your power to judge character is, and must remain, a matter of opinion. Discussions about it would be useless and endless; besides, after your letters to me, you will hardly be astonished that I decline to continue this correspondence.

"I remain, yours faithfully,

"OCTAVIA HILL."

I *was*, however, a little astonished, though it takes a good deal to astonish me nowadays, at the suddenness of the change in tone; but it rendered my next reply easier:—

"CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE, OXFORD,  
7th November, 1877.

"My dear Octavia,—You err singularly in imagining I invited you to a 'discussion.' I am not apt to discuss *anything* with persons of your sentimental volatility; and those with whom I enter on discussion do not, therefore, find it either useless or endless.

"I required of you an answer to a perfectly simple question. That answer I require again. Your most prudent friends will, I believe, if you consult them, recommend your rendering it; for they will probably perceive—what it is strange should have escaped a mind so logical and delicate as yours—that you have a better right to express your 'opinions' of my discarded servants, to myself, who know them, and after the time is long past when your frankness could have injured them, than to express your 'opinions' of your discarded master, to persons who know nothing of him, at the precise time when such expression of opinion is calculated to do him the most fatal injury.

"In the event of your final refusal, you will oblige me by sending me a copy of my last letter for publication,—your own being visibly prepared for the press.

"J. R.

"Should you inadvertently have destroyed my last letter, a short abstract of its contents, as apprehended by you, will be all that is needful."

"14, NOTTINGHAM PLACE, W., 8th Nov., 1877.

"Dear Mr. Ruskin,—I did consult friends whom I consider both prudent and generous before I declined to make myself the accuser of third persons.

"I send you at your request a copy of your last letter; but I disapprove of the publication of this correspondence. Such a publication obviously could not be complete,\* and if incomplete must be misleading. Neither do I see what good object it could serve.

"I feel it due to our old friendship to add the expression of my conviction that the publication would injure you, and could not injure me.

"I am, yours faithfully,

"OCTAVIA HILL."

I saw no occasion for continuing the correspondence farther, and closed it on the receipt of this last letter, in a private note, which Miss Hill is welcome to make public, if she has retained it.

Respecting the general tenor of her letters, I have only now to observe that she is perfectly right in supposing me unfit to conduct, myself, the operations with which I entrusted *her*; but that she has no means of estimating the success of other operations with which I did *not* entrust her,—such as the organization of the Oxford Schools of Art; and that she has become unfortunately of late confirmed in the impression, too common among reformatory labourers, that no work can be practical which is

\* This is not at all obvious to me. I can complete it to the last syllable, if Miss Hill wishes.

prospective. The real relations of her effort to that of the St. George's Guild have already been stated, (Fors, Oct. 1871, pages 13, 14); and the estimate which I had formed of it is shown not to have been unkind, by her acknowledgment of it in the following letter,—justifying me, I think, in the disappointment expressed in the beginning of this article.

" 14, NOTTINGHAM PLACE, Oct. 3rd, 1875.

" My dear Mr. Ruskin,—I send you accounts of both blocks of buildings, and have paid in to your bank the second cheque, —that for Paradise Place, £20 5s. 8d. I think neither account requires explanation.

" But I have to thank you, more than words will achieve doing, in silent gratitude, for your last letter, which I shall treasure as one of my best possessions. I had no idea you could have honestly spoken so of work which I have always thought had impressed you more with its imperfections, than as contributing to any good end. That it actually was in large measure derived from you, there can be no doubt. I have been reading during my holidays, for the first time since before I knew you, the first volume of 'Modern Painters,' which Mr. Bond was good enough to lend me these holidays; and I was much impressed, not only with the distinct recollection I had of paragraph after paragraph when once the subject was recalled,—not only with the memory of how the passages had struck me when a girl,—but how even the individual words had been new to me then, and the quotations,—notably that from George Herbert about the not fooling,—had first sent me to read the authors quoted from. I could not help recalling, and seeing distinctly, how the whole tone and teaching of the book, striking on the imagination at an impressionable age, had biassed, not only this public work, but all my life. I always knew it, but I traced the distinct lines of influence. Like all derived work, it has been, as I said, built out of material my own experience has furnished, and built very

differently to anything others would have done ; but I know something of how much it owes to you, and in as far as it has been in any way successful, I wish you would put it among the achievements of your life. You sometimes seem to see so few of these. Mine is indeed poor and imperfect and small ; but it is in this *kind of way* that the best influence tells, going right down into people, and coming out in a variety of forms, not easily recognized, yet distinctly known by those who know best ; and hundreds of people, whose powers are tenfold my own, have received,—will receive,—their direction from your teaching, and will do work better worth your caring to have influenced.

“I am, yours always affectionately,

“OCTAVIA HILL.”

With this letter the notice of its immediate subject in Fors will cease, though I have yet a word to say for my other acquaintances and fellow-labourers. Miss Hill will, I hope, retain the administration of the Marylebone houses as long as she is inclined, making them, by her zealous and disinterested service, as desirable and profitable a possession to the Guild as hitherto to me. It is always to be remembered that she has acted as the administrator of this property, and paid me five per cent. upon it regularly,—entirely without salary, and in pure kindness to the tenants. My own part in the work was in taking five instead of ten per cent., which the houses would have been made to pay to another landlord ; and in pledging myself neither to sell the property nor raise the rents, thus enabling Miss Hill to assure the tenants of peace in their homes, and encourage every effort at the improvement of them.





## FORS CLAVIGERA.

*SECOND SERIES.*

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"YEA, THE WORK OF OUR HANDS, ESTABLISH THOU IT."

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### LETTER III.

By my promise that, in the text of this series of Fors, there shall be "no syllable of complaint, or of scorn," I pray the reader to understand that I in no wise intimate any change of feeling on my own part. I never felt more difficulty in my life than I do, at this instant, in not lamenting certain things with more than common lament, and in not speaking of certain people with more than common scorn.

Nor it is possible to fulfil these rightly warning functions of Fors without implying *some* measure of scorn. For instance, in the matter of choice of books, it is impossible to warn my scholars against a book, without implying a certain kind of contempt for it. For I never would warn them against any writer whom I had complete respect for,—however adverse to me, or my work. There are few stronger adver-

saries to St. George than Voltaire. But my scholars are welcome to read as much of Voltaire as they like. His voice is mighty among the ages. Whereas they are entirely forbidden Miss Martineau,—not because she is an infidel, but because she is a vulgar and foolish one.\*

Do not say, or think, I am breaking my word in asserting, once for all, with reference to example, this necessary principle. This very vow and law that I have set myself, *must* be honoured sometimes in the breach of it, so only that the transgression be visibly not wanton or incontinent. Nay, in this very instance it is because I am not speaking in *pure* contempt, but have lately been as much surprised by the beauty of a piece of Miss Martineau's writings, as I have been grieved by the deadly effect of her writings generally on the mind of one of my best pupils, who had read them without telling me, that I make her a definite example. In future, it will be ordinarily enough for me to say to my pupils privately that they are not to read such and such books; while, for general order to my *Fors* readers, they may be well content, it seems to me, with the list of the books I want them to read constantly, and with such casual re-

\* I use the word vulgar, here, in its first sense of egoism, not of selfishness, but of not seeing one's own relations to the universe. Miss Martineau plans a book—afterwards popular—and goes to breakfast, “not knowing what a great thing had been done.” So Mr. Buckle, dying, thinks only—he shall not finish *his* book. Not at all whether God will ever make up *His*.

commendation as I may be able to give of current literature. For instance, there is a quite lovely little book just come out about Irish children, 'Castle Blair,' —(which, let me state at once, I have strong personal, though stronger impersonal, reasons for recommending, the writer being a very dear friend ; and some Irish children, for many and many a year, much more than that). But the *impersonal* reasons are—first, that the book is good and lovely, and true ; having the best description of a noble child in it, (Winny,) that I ever read ; and nearly the best description of the next best thing—a noble dog ; and reason second is that, after Miss Edgeworth's 'Ormond' and 'Absentee,' this little book will give more true insight into the proper way of managing Irish people than any other I know.\*

Wherewith I have some more serious recommendations to give ; and the first shall be of this most beautiful passage of Miss Martineau, which is quoted from 'Deerbrook' in the review of her autobiography :—

"In the house of every wise parent, may then be seen an epitome of life—a sight whose consolation is needed at times, perhaps, by all. Which of the little

\* Also, I have had it long on my mind to name the 'Adventures of a Phaeton' as a very delightful and wise book of its kind; very full of pleasant play, and deep and pure feeling ; much interpretation of some of the best points of German character ; and, last and least, with pieces of description in it which I should be glad, selfishly, to think inferior to what the public praise in 'Modern Painters,'—I can only say, they seem to *me* quite as good.

children of a virtuous household can conceive of his entering into his parents' pursuits, or interfering with them? How sacred are the study and the office, the apparatus of a knowledge and a power which he can only venerate! Which of these little ones dreams of disturbing the course of his parents' thought or achievement? Which of them conceives of the daily routine of the household—its going forth and coming in, its rising and its rest—having been different before its birth, or that it would be altered by his absence? It is even a matter of surprise to him when it now and then occurs to him that there is anything set apart for him—that he has clothes and couch, and that his mother thinks and cares for him. If he lags behind in a walk, or finds himself alone among the trees, he does not dream of being missed; but home rises up before him as he has always seen it—his father thoughtful, his mother occupied, and the rest gay, with the one difference of *his\** not being there. This he believes, and has no other trust than in his shriek of terror, for being ever remembered more. Yet, all the while, from day to day, from year to year, without one moment's intermission, is the providence of his parent around him, brooding over the workings of his infant spirit, chastening its passions, nourishing its affections—now *troubling it with salutary pain*, now *animating it with even more wholesome delight*. All

\* Italics mine.

the while, is the order of the household affairs regulated for the comfort and profit of these lowly little ones, though they regard it reverently, because they cannot comprehend it. They may not know of all this—how their guardian bends over their pillow nightly, and lets no word of their careless talk drop unheeded, and records every sob of infant grief, hails every brightening gleam of reason and every chirp of childish glee—they may not know this, because they could not understand it aright, and each little heart would be inflated with pride, each little mind would lose the grace and purity of its unconsciousness ; but the guardianship is not the less real, constant, and tender for its being unrecognized by its objects."

This passage is of especial value to me just now, because I have presently to speak about faith, and its power ; and I have never myself thought of the innocent *faithlessness* of children, but only of their faith. The idea given here by Miss Martineau is entirely new to me, and most beautiful. And had she gone on thus, expressing her own feelings modestly, she would have been a most noble person, and a verily 'great' writer. She became a vulgar person, and a little writer, in her conceit ;—of which I can say no more, else I should break my vow unnecessarily.

And by way of atonement for even this involuntary disobedience to it, I have to express great shame for some words spoken, in one of the letters of the first

series, in total misunderstanding of Mr. Gladstone's character.

I know so little of public life, and see so little of the men who are engaged in it, that it has become impossible for me to understand their conduct or speech, as it is reported in journals.

There are reserves, references, difficulties, limits, excitements, in all their words and ways, which are inscrutable to me; and at this moment I am unable to say a word about the personal conduct of any one, respecting the Turkish or any other national question,—remaining myself perfectly clear as to what was always needed, and still needs, to be *done*, but utterly unable to conceive *why* people talk, or do, or do not, as hitherto they have spoken, done, and left undone. But as to the actual need, it is now nearly two years since Mr. Carlyle, Mr. Froude, and several other men of 'creditable' (shall we say) name, gathered together at call of Mr. Gladstone, as for a great national need, together with a few other men of more retired and studious mind, Edward Burne Jones for one, and myself for another, did then plainly and to the best of their faculty tell the English nation what it had to do.

The people of England answered, by the mouths of their journals, that Mr. Carlyle and Mr. Froude knew nothing of history, that Mr. Gladstone was a dishonest leader of a party, and that the rest of us were insignificant, or insane, persons.

Whereupon the significant and sagacious persons, guiding the opinions of the public, through its press, set themselves diligently to that solemn task.

And I will take some pains to calculate for you, my now doubtless well-informed and soundly purposed readers, what expenditure of type there has been on your education, guidance, and exhortation by those significant persons, in these last two years.

I am getting into that *Cathedra Pestilentiae* again!— My good reader, I mean, truly and simply, that I hope to get, for next month, some approximate measure of the space in heaven which would be occupied by the unfolded tissue or web of all the columns of the British newspapers which have during these last two years discussed, in your pay, the Turkish question. All that counsel, you observe, you have bought with a price. Mr. Carlyle and Mr. Froude gave you theirs gratis, as all the best things are given; I put nearly a prohibitory tax upon mine, that you might not merely travel with your boots on it; but here was an article of counsel made up for your consumption at *market* price. You have paid for it, I can tell you *that*, approximately, just now, one million nine hundred and four thousand nine hundred and eighteen pounds. You have voted also in your beautiful modern manner, and daily directed your governors what they were to do for British interests and honour. And your result is— well, you shall tell me your opinions of that next month;

but—whatever your opinions may be—here IS the result for you, in words which are not of the newest, certainly, and yet are in a most accurate sense “This Evening’s News.”

“Quare fremuerunt Gentes, et Populi meditati sunt inania.

“Astiterunt Reges terræ, et Principes convenerunt in unum, adversus Dominum et adversus Christum ejus.

“Disrumpamus vincula eorum, et projiciamus a nobis jugum ipsorum.

“Qui habitat in celis irridebit eos, et Dominus sub-sannabit eos.

“Tunc loquetur ad eos in ira sua, et in furore suo conturbabit eos.”

If you can read that bit of David and St. Jerome, as it stands, so be it. If not, this translation is closer than the one you, I suppose, *don't know* :—

“Why have the nations foamed as the sea ; and the people meditated emptiness ?

“The Kings of the earth stood, and the First Ministers met together in conference, against the Lord, and against His Christ.

“Let us break, they said, the chains of the Lord and Christ. Let us cast away from us the yoke of the Lord and Christ.

“He that inhabits heaven shall laugh at them, and the Lord shall mock them.

"Then shall He speak to them in His anger, and torment them with His strength."

There are one or two of the points of difference in this version which I wish you to note. Our 'why do the heathen rage' is unintelligible to us, because we don't think of *ourselves* as 'heathen' usually. But we are; and the nations spoken of are—the British public, —and the All-publics of our day, and of all days.

Nor is the word 'rage' the right one, in the least. It means to "fret idly," like useless sea,—incapable of *real* rage, or of *any* sense,—foaming out only its own shame. "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt;" —and even just now—the purest and best of public men spitting out emptiness only and mischief. "*Fluctibus et fremitu assurgens, Benace MARINO.*" In the Septuagint, the word is to neigh like a horse—("They were as fed horses in the morning; every one neighed after his neighbour's wife.")

Then, I have put the full words 'of the Lord and Christ' in the third verse, instead of 'their,' because else people don't see who 'they' are.

And in the fourth verse, observe that the 'anger' of the Lord is the *mind* in which He speaks to the kings; but His 'fury' is the *practical* stress of the thunder of His power, and of the hail and death with which He 'troubles' them and torments. Read *this* piece of evening's news, for instance. It is one

of thousands such. That is what is meant by "H  
shall vex them in His sore displeasure," which worc  
you have chanted to your pipes and bellows so sweet!  
and so long,—'His so-o-o-ore dis-plea-a-sure.'

But here is the *thing*, nearly at your door  
reckoning by railway distance. "The mother got in  
patient, thrust the child into the snow, and hurrie  
on—not looking back."

But *you* are not 'vexed,' you say? No,—perha<sup>p</sup>  
that is because you are so very good. And perha<sup>p</sup>  
the muffins will be as cold as the snow, too, soon,  
you don't eat them. Yet if, after breakfast, you loo<sup>t</sup>  
out of window westward, you may see some "vex-  
tion" even in England and Wales, of which mor  
presently, and if you read this second Psalm again, ar  
make some effort to understand it, it may be provision-  
ally useful to you,—provisionally on your recognizir  
that there is a God at all, and that it is a *Lord* th  
*reigneth*, and not merely a *Law* that reigneth, accor-  
ing to the latter-day divinity of the Duke of Argy  
and Mr. George Dawson. Have patience with m  
I'm not speaking as I didn't mean to. I want yo  
to read, and attentively, some things that the Duke  
Argyll and Mr. Dawson have said; but you mu  
have the caterpillar washed out of the cabbage, first.

I want you to read,—ever so many things. Fir  
of all, and nothing else till you have well mastered  
that, the history of Montenegro given by Mr. Gladstor

in the 'Nineteenth Century' for May 1877, p. 360. After that, 'Some Current Fallacies about Turks,' etc., by the Rev. Malcolm MacColl, 'Nineteenth Century,' December 1877, p. 831. After that, the Duke of Argyll's 'Morality in Politics.' And after that, the obituary of 'George Dawson, Politician, Lecturer, and Preacher,' by the Rev. R. W. Dale, 'Nineteenth Century,' August 1877, p. 44.

It is an entirely kind and earnest review of one of the chief enemies of Evangelicalism, by an Evangelical clergyman. The closing passages of it (pp. 59 to 61) are entirely beautiful and wise,—the last sentence, let me thankfully place for an abiding comfort and power in St. George's schools.

"To despise the creeds in which the noblest intellects of Christendom in past times found rest, is presumptuous folly; to suppose that these creeds are a final and exact statement of all that the Church can ever know, is to forget that in every creed there are two elements,—the divine substance, and the human form. The form must change with the changing thoughts of men; and even the substance may come to shine with clearer light, and to reveal unsuspected glories, as God and man come nearer together."

And the whole of the piece of biography thus nobly closed is full of instruction; but, in the course of it, there is a statement (pp. 49—51) respecting which I have somewhat contradictory to say, and that very

gravely. I am sorry to leave out any of the piece I refer to : but those of my readers who have not access to the book, will find the gist of what I must contradict, qualifiedly, in these following fragments.

A. "The strength of his (George Dawson's) moral teaching was largely derived from the firmness of his own conviction that the laws which govern human life are not to be evaded ; that they assert their authority with relentless severity ; that it is of no use to try to cheat them ; that they have no pity ; that we must obey them, or else suffer the consequences of our disobedience. He insisted, with a frequency, an earnestness, and an energy which showed the depth of his own sense of the importance of this part of his teaching, that what a man sows he must also reap,—no matter though he has sown ignorantly or carelessly ; that the facts of the physical and moral universe have a stern reality ; and that, if we refuse to learn and to recognize the facts, the best intentions are unavailing. The iron girder must be strong enough to bear the weight that is put upon it, or else it will give way,—no matter whether the girder is meant to support the roof of a railway station, or the floor of a church, or the gallery of a theatre. Hard work is necessary for success in business ; and the man who works hardest—other things being equal—is most likely to succeed, whether he is a saint or a sinner."

B. "The facts of the universe are steadfast, and not

to be changed by human fancies or follies ; the laws of the universe are relentless, and will not relax in the presence of human weakness, or give way under the pressure of human passion and force."

C. "No matter though you have a most devout and conscientious belief that by mere praying you can save a town from typhoid fever ; if the drainage is bad and the water foul, praying will never save the town from typhoid."

Thus far, Mr. Dale has been stating the substance of Mr. Dawson's teaching ; he now, as accepting that substance, so far as it reaches, himself proceeds to carry it farther, and to apply the same truths—admitting them to be truths—to spiritual things. And now, from *him* we have this following most important and noble passage, which I accept for wholly true, and place in St. George's schools.

D. "It would be strange if these truths became false as soon as they are applied to the religious side of the life of man. The spiritual universe is no more to be made out of a man's own head, than the material universe or the moral universe. *There*, too, the conditions of human life are fixed. *There*, too, we have to respect the facts ; and, whether we respect them or not, the facts remain. *There*, too, we have to confess the authority of the actual laws ; and, whether we confess it or not, we shall suffer for breaking them. To suppose that, in relation to the spiritual universe, it

is safe or right to believe what we think it pleasant to believe,—to suppose that, because we think it is eminently desirable that the spiritual universe should be ordered in a particular way, therefore we are at liberty to act as though this were certainly the way in which it is ordered, and that, though we happen to be wrong, it will make no difference,—is preposterous! No ; water drowns, fire burns, whether we believe it or not. No belief of ours will change the facts, or reverse the laws of the spiritual universe. It is our first business to discover the laws, and to learn how the facts stand."

I accept this passage—observe, totally,—but I accept it for itself. The basis of it—the preceding Dawsonian statements, A, B, and C,—I wholly deny, so far as I am a Christian. If the Word of Christ be true, the facts of the physical universe are *not* steadfast. They are steadfast only for the infidel. But these signs shall evermore follow them that believe. "They shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them." No matter how bad the drainage of the town, how foul the water, "He shall deliver thee from the noisome pestilence; and though a thousand fall at thy right hand, it shall not come nigh *thee*." This, as a Christian, I am bound to believe. This, speaking as a Christian, I am bound to proclaim, whatever the consequences may be to the town, or the opinion of me formed by the Common Council ; as a

Christian, I believe prayer to be, in the last sense, sufficient for the salvation of the town; and drainage, in the last sense, insufficient for its salvation. Not that you will find me, looking back through the pages of *Fors*, unconcerned about drainage. But if, of the two, I must choose between drains and prayer—why, “look you”—whatever you may think of my wild and whirling words, I will go pray.

And now, therefore, for St. George's schools, I most solemnly reverse the statement B, and tell my scholars, with all the force that is in me, that the facts of the universe are NOT steadfast, that they ARE changed by human fancies, and by human follies (much more by human wisdoms)—that the laws of the universe are no more relentless than the God who wrote them,—that they WILL relax in the presence of human weakness, and DO give way under the pressure of human passion and force, and give way so totally, before so little passion and force, that if you have but ‘faith’ as a grain of mustard seed, *nothing* shall be impossible unto you.

“Are these merely fine phrases, or is he mad, as people say?” one of my polite readers asks of another.

Neither, oh polite and pitying friend. Observe, in the first place, that I simply speak *as* a Christian, and express to you accurately what Christian doctrine is. I am myself so nearly, as you are so grievously faithless

to less than the least grain of—Colman's—mustard, that *I* can take up no serpents, and raise no dead.

But I don't say, therefore, that the dead are not raised, nor that Christ is not risen, nor the head of the serpent bowed under the foot of the Seed of the Woman. I say only,—*if* my faith is vain, it is because I am yet in my sins. And to others I say—what Christ bids me say. That, simply,—that literally,—that, positively; and no more. “If thou wilt believe, thou shalt see the salvation of God.”

If thou *wilt* (wouldest)—Faith being essentially a matter of will, after some other conditions are met. For how shall they believe on whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a preacher? Yea; but—asks St. George, murmuring behind his visor, —much more, how shall they hear without—ears.

He that *hath* ears, (it is written)—let him hear;—but how of him that *hath* none?

For observe, far the greater multitude of men *cannot* hear of Christ at all. You can't tell an unloving person, what love is, preach you till his doomsday. What is to become of them, God knows, who is their Judge; but since they cannot hear of Christ, they cannot believe in Him, and for them, the Laws of the Universe are unchangeable enough. But for those who *can* hear—comes the farther question whether they *will*. And then, if they do, whether they will be steadfast in the faith, steadfast behind the shield, point in earth,

cross of iron—(compare ‘Laws of Fésole,’ chapter iii., and the old heraldic word ‘restrial’ of bearings, first written in blood,)—else, having begun in the spirit, they may only be “made perfect in the flesh.” (Gal. iii. 3.) But if, having begun in the Spirit, they grieve it not, there will be assuredly among them the chorus-leader. He that “leads forth the choir of the Spirit,” and worketh MIRACLES among you. (Gal. iii. 5.)

Now; lastly, read in the ninth chapter of Froude’s History of England, the passage beginning, “Here, therefore, we are to enter upon one of the grand scenes of history,”\* down to, “He desired us each to choose our confessor, and to confess our sins one to another;” and the rest, I give here, for end of this *Fors* :—

“The day after, he preached a sermon in the chapel on the 59th Psalm: ‘O God, Thou hast cast us off, Thou hast destroyed us;’ concluding with the words, ‘It is better that we should suffer here a short penance for our faults, than be reserved for the eternal pains of hell hereafter;’—and so ending, he turned to us, and bade us all do as we saw him do. Then rising from his place he went direct to the eldest of the brethren, who was sitting nearest to himself, and, kneeling before him, begged his forgiveness for any offence which in heart, word, or deed he might have

\* Octavo edition of 1858, vol. ii., p. 341.

committed against him. Thence he proceeded to the next, and said the same; and so to the next, through us all, we following him, and saying as he did,—each from each imploring pardon.

“Thus, with unobtrusive nobleness, did these poor men prepare themselves for the end; not less beautiful—in their resolution, not less deserving the everlasting—remembrance of mankind, than those three hundred—who in the summer morning sate combing their golden—hair in the passes of Thermopylæ. We will not regret—their cause; there is no cause for which any man can—more nobly suffer than to witness that it is better for—him to die than to speak words which he does not—mean. Nor, in this their hour of trial, were they left—without higher comfort.

“‘The third day after,’ the story goes on, ‘was the mass of the Holy Ghost, and God made known His presence among us. For when the host was lifted up, there came as it were a whisper of air, which breathed upon our faces as we knelt. Some perceived it with the bodily senses; all felt it as it thrilled into their hearts. And then followed a sweet, soft sound of music, at which our venerable father was so moved, God being thus abundantly manifest among us, that he sank down in tears, and for a long time could not continue the service—we all remaining stupefied, hearing the melody, and feeling the marvellous effects of it upon our spirits, but knowing neither whence it came

nor whither it went. Only our hearts rejoiced as we perceived that God was with us indeed.'"

It can't be the end of this *Fors* however, I find, (15th February, half-past seven morning,) for I have forgotten twenty things I meant to say; and this instant, in my morning's reading, opened and read, being in a dreamy state, and not knowing well what I was doing,—of all things to find a new message!—in the first chapter of Proverbs.

I was in a dreamy state, because I had got a letter about the Thirlmere debate, which was to me, in my purposed quietness, like one of the voices on the hill behind the Princess Pairzael. And *she* could not hold, without cotton in her ears, dear wise sweet thing. But luckily for me, I have just had help from the Beata Vigri at Venice, who sent me her own picture and St. Catherine's, yesterday, for a Valentine; and so I *can* hold on:—only just read this first of Proverbs with *me*, please.

"The Proverbs of Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel.

"To *know* wisdom and instruction."

(Not to 'opine' them.)

"To *perceive* the words of understanding."

(He that hath eyes, let him read—he that hath ears, hear. And for the Blind and the Deaf,—if patient and silent by the right road-side,—there may also be some one to say 'He is coming.')

"To receive the instruction of WISDOM, JUSTICE, and JUDGMENT, and EQUITY."

Four things,—oh friends,—which you have not only to *perceive*, but to *receive*. And the species of these four things, and the origin of their species,—you know them, doubtless, well,—in these scientific days?

"To give subtlety to the simple; to the *young* man, knowledge and discretion."

(Did ever one hear, lately, of a young man's wanting either? Or of a simple person who wished to be subtle? Are not we all subtle—even to the total defeat of our hated antagonists, the Prooshians and Rooshians?)

"A wise man will hear and will increase learning."

(e.g. "A stormy meeting took place in the Birmingham Town Hall last night. It was convened by the Conservative Association for the purpose of passing a vote of confidence in the Government; but the Liberal Association also issued placards calling upon Liberals to attend. The chair was taken by Mr. Stone, the President of the Conservative Association, but the greater part of his speech was inaudible even upon the platform, owing to the frequent bursts of applause, groans, and Kentish fire, intermingled with comic songs. Flags bearing the words 'Vote for Bright' and 'Vote for Gladstone' were hoisted, and were torn to pieces by the supporters of the Government. Dr. Sebastian Evans moved, and Alderman Brinsley seconded, a resolution

expressing confidence in Her Majesty's Government. Mr. J. S. Wright moved, and Mr. R. W. Dale seconded, an amendment, but neither speaker could make himself heard; and on the resolution being put to the meeting it was declared carried, but the Liberal speakers disputed the decision of the chairman, and asserted that two-thirds of the meeting were against the resolution."—

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, February 13th, 1878.)

"And a man of understanding shall *attain unto* wise counsels."

(Yes, in due time; but oh me—over what burning marble, and by what sifting of wheat!)

"To understand a proverb, and the interpretation."

(Yes, truly—all this chapter I have known from my mother's knee—and never understood it till this very hour.)

"The words of the wise and their *dark* sayings."

(Behold, this dreamer cometh,—and this is his dream.)

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction."

(e.g. "Herr —, one of the Socialist leaders, declaring that he and his friends, since they do not fear earthly Powers, are not likely to be afraid of Powers of any other kind."—*Pall Mall Gazette*, same date.\*)

\* I take this passage out of an important piece of intelligence of a quite contrary and greatly encouraging kind. "A new political party has just been added to the many parties which already existed in Germany. It

"My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother."

The father is to teach the boy's reason; and the mother, his will. He is to take his father's word, and to obey his mother's—look, even to the death.

(Therefore it is that all laws of holy life are called 'mother-laws' in Venice.—*Fors*, 1877, page 38.)

"For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head."

Alas, yes!—once men were crowned in youth with the gold of their father's glory; when the hoary head was crowned also in the way of righteousness.

And so they went their way to prison, and to death.

But now, by divine liberty, and general indication, even Solomon's *own* head is not crowned by any means.  
—*Fors*, 1877, p. 138.

"And chains about thy neck"—(yes, collar of the calls itself 'the Christian Social party.' It is headed by several prominent Court preachers of Berlin, who, alarmed at the progress made by the Socialists, have taken this means of resisting their subversive doctrines. The object of the party is to convince the people that there can be no true system of government which is not based upon Christianity; and this principle is being elaborately set forth in large and enthusiastic meetings. Herr Most, one of the Socialist leaders, has given the political pastors an excellent text for their orations by declaring that he and his friends, since they do not fear earthly Powers, are not likely to be afraid of Powers of any other kind. Branches of the Christian Socialist party have been formed in several of the most important German towns; and they confidently expect to be able to secure a definite position in the next Imperial Parliament."

knightliest. Let not thy mother's Mercy and Truth forsake thee) bind them about thy neck, write them upon the tables of thine heart. *She* may forget: yet will not *I* forget thee.

(Therefore they say—of the sweet mother laws of their loving God and lowly Christ—‘Disrumpamus vincula eorum et projiciamus a nobis, jugum ipsorum.’)

Nay—nay, but if they say thus then?

“Let us swallow them up *alive*, as the grave.”

(Other murderers kill, before they bury;—but YOU, you observe, are invited to bury before you kill. All these things, when once you know their meaning, have their physical symbol quite accurately beside them. Read the story of the last explosion in Yorkshire—where a woman’s husband and her seven sons fell—all seven—all eight—together: about the beginning of barley harvest it was, I think.)

“And *whole* as those that go down into the pit.”

(Other murderers kill the body only, but YOU are invited to kill ‘whole’—body and soul. Yea—and to kill with such wholeness that the creatures shall not even know they ever *had* a soul, any more than a frog of Egypt. You will not, think you. Ah, but hear yet—for second thoughts are best.)

“We shall find all precious substance. We shall fill our houses with spoil.”

(ALL precious substance. Is there anything in those houses round the park that could possibly be suggested

as wanting?—And *spoil*,—all taken from the killed people. Have they not sped—have they not divided the spoil—to every man a damsel or two. Not one bit of it all wroked for with your own hand,—even so, mother of Sisera.)

“Cast in thy lot among *us*.”—(The Company is limited.)

“Let us all have one”—(heart? no, for *none* of us have that;—mind? no, for none of us have that;—but let us all have one)—“purse.” And now—that you know the meaning of it—I write to the end my morning’s reading.

My son, walk not thou in the way with them.

Refrain thy foot from their path. For their feet *run* to evil, and *hasten* to shed blood.

Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird.

And they lay wait for their *own* blood.

They lurk privily for their *own* lives.

SO ARE THE WAYS OF EVERY ONE THAT IS GREEDY OF GAIN WHICH TAKETH AWAY THE LIFE OF THE OWNERS THEREOF.

Now, therefore, let us see what these ways are—the Viae Peccatorum,—the Pleasantness of them, and the Peace.

The following are portions of a letter from the brother of one of my country friends here, who has been pastor of the English Baptist church in Tredegar about twenty years.

"TREDEGAR, 11th February, 1878.

"Some three hundred men are said to have been discharged from the works last week. The mills are to be closed all this week, and the iron-workers do not expect to be able to earn a penny. About a day and a half per week, on the average, is what they have been working for several months. The average earnings have been six shillings a week, and out of that they have to pay for coal, house-rent, and other expenses, leaving very little for food and clothing. The place has been divided into districts. I have one of these districts to investigate and relieve. In that district there are a hundred and thirty families in distress, and which have been relieved on an average of two shillings per week for each family for the last month. Many of them are some days every week without anything to eat, and with nothing but water to drink: they have nothing but rags to cover them by day, and very little beside their wearing apparel to cover them on their beds at night. They have sold or pawned their furniture, and everything for which they could obtain the smallest sum of money. In fact, they seem to me to be actually starving. In answer to our appeal, we have received about three hundred pounds, and have distributed the greater part of it. We also distributed a large quantity of clothing last week which we had received from different places. We feel increasing anxiety about the future. When we began, we hoped the prospect would soon brighten, and that we should

be able before long to discontinue our efforts. Instead of that, however, things look darker than ever. We cannot tell what would become of us if contributions to our funds should now cease to come in, and we do not know how long we may hope that they will continue to come in, and really cannot tell who is to blame, nor what is the remedy."

'They know not at *what* they stumble. How should they ?

Well—will they hear at last then ? Has Jael-Atropos at last driven her nail well down through the Helmet of Death he wore instead of the Helmet of Salvation—mother of Sisera ?

# FORS CLAVIGERA.

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LETTERS

*TO THE WORKMEN AND LABOURERS  
OF GREAT BRITAIN.*

By JOHN RUSKIN, LL.D.

*NEW SERIES.*

LETTER THE FOURTH.

MARCH 21ST, 1880.



GEORGE ALLEN,  
SUNNEYSIDE, ORPINGTON, KENT.

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Hazell, Watson, and Viney, Printers, London and Aylesbury.

**2ND SERIES, IV.]**

**IO**

Ω θνητοῖσι δικαιοτάτη, πολύολβε, ποθεανή,  
ἔξ ἵστητος ἀεὶ θνητοῖς χαίρουσα δικαίοις,  
πάντιμ', δλβίομοιφε, Δικαιοσύνη μεγαλαυχής,  
ἢ καθαραῖς γνώμαις αἰεὶ τὰ δέοντα βραβεύεις,  
ἄθραυστος τὸ συνειδός ἀεὶ θραύεις γάρ ἄπαντας,  
ὅσσοι μὴ τὸ σὸν ἡλθον ὑπὸ ἔνγρον, ἀλλοπρόσωλλοι,  
πλάστιγξεις βριαρῆσι παρεγκλίναντες απλήστως·  
ἀστασίαστε, φίλη πάντων, φιλόκωμ', ἐρατεινή,  
εἰρήνη χαίρουσα, βίον ζηλοῦσα βέβαιον.  
αἰεὶ γάρ τὸ πλέον στυγέεις, ἵστητη δὲ χαίρεις.  
ἐν σοὶ γάρ σοφίη ἀρετῆς τέλος ἐσθλὸν ἱκάνει.  
κλῦθι, θεά, κακίην θνητῶν θράνουσα δικαίως,  
ὡς ἀν ἰσορρόπιησιν ἀεὶ βιος εσθλὸς ὁδεύοι  
θνήτων ανθρώπων, οἱ ἀρουρῆς καρπὸν ἔδουσιν,  
καὶ ζώων πάντων, ὅπόσ' ἐν κόλποισι τιθηρεῖ  
γαιῶν θεὰ μήτηρ καλή ποντιος εἰνάλιος Ζεύς.

*Thou who doest right for mortals,—full of blessings,—thou, the  
desired of hearts.*

*Rejoicing, for thy equity, in mortal righteousness;—  
All-honoured, happy-fated, majestic-miened Justice,  
Who dost arbitrate, for pure minds, all that ought to be.  
Unmoved of countenance thou;—(it is they who shall be moved  
That come not under thy yoke,—other always to others,  
Driving insatiably oblique the loaded scales.)  
Thou,—seditionless, dear to all—lover of revel, and lovely,  
Rejoicing in peace, zealous for pureness of life,  
(For thou hatest always the More, and rejoicest in equalness,  
For in thee the wisdom of virtue reaches its noble end.)  
Hear, Goddess!—trouble thou justly the mischief of mortals,  
So that always in fair equipoise the noble life may travel  
Of mortal men that eat the fruit of the furrow,  
And of all living creatures, whom nurse in their bosoms  
Earth the Goddess mother, and the God of the deep sea.*

*ORPHEUS.—Sixty-third Hymn.*

# FORS CLAVIGERA.

*SECOND SERIES.*

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“YEA, THE WORK OF OUR HANDS, ESTABLISH THOU IT.”

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## LETTER IV.

BRANTWOOD, 8th February, 1880.

IT is now close on two years since I was struck by the illness which brought these Letters to an end, as a periodical series; nor did I think, on first recovery, that I should ever be able to conclude them otherwise than by a few comments in arranging their topical index.

But my strength is now enough restored to permit me to add one or two more direct pieces of teaching to the broken statements of principle which it has become difficult to gather out of the mixed substance of the book. These will be written at such leisure as I may find, and form an eighth volume, which with a thin ninth, containing indices, I shall be thankful if I can issue in this tenth year from the beginning of the work.

To-day, being my sixty-first birthday, I would ask

leave to say a few words to the friends who care for me, and the readers who are anxious about me, touching the above-named illness itself. For a physician's estimate of it, indeed, I can only refer them to my physicians. But there were some conditions of it which I knew better than they could : namely, first, the precise and sharp distinction between the state of morbid inflammation of brain which gave rise to false visions, (whether in sleep, or trance, or waking, in broad daylight, with perfect knowledge of the real things in the room, while yet I saw others that were not there,) and the not morbid, however dangerous, states of more or less excited temper, and too much quickened thought, which gradually led up to the illness, accelerating in action during the eight or ten days preceding the actual giving way of the brain, (as may be enough seen in the fragmentary writing of the first edition of my notes on the Turner exhibition) ; and yet, up to the transitional moment of first hallucination, entirely healthy, and in the full sense of the word 'sane' ; just as the natural inflammation about a healing wound in flesh is sane, up to the transitional edge where it may pass at a crisis into morbific, or even mortified, substance. And this more or less inflamed, yet still perfectly healthy, condition of mental power, may be traced by any watchful reader, in *Fors*, nearly from its beginning,—that manner of mental ignition or irritation being for the time a great additional force, enabling me to discern more clearly, and

say more vividly, what for long years it had been in my heart to say.

Now I observed that in talking of the illness, whether during its access or decline, none of the doctors ever thought of thus distinguishing what was definitely diseased in the brain action, from what was simply curative—had there been time enough—of the wounded nature in me. And in the second place, not perceiving, or at least not admitting, this difference; nor, for the most part, apprehending (except the one who really carried me through, and who never lost hope—Dr. Parsons of Hawkshead) that there *were* any mental wounds to be healed, they made, and still make, my friends more anxious about me than there is occasion for: which anxiety I partly regret, as it pains them; but much more if it makes them more doubtful than they used to be (which, for some, is saying a good deal) of the “truth and soberness” of *Fors* itself. Throughout every syllable of which, hitherto written, the reader will find one consistent purpose, and perfectly conceived system, far more deeply founded than any bruited about under their founder’s names; including in its balance one vast department of human skill,—the arts,—which the vulgar economists are wholly incapable of weighing; and a yet more vast realm of human enjoyment—the spiritual affections,—which materialist thinkers are alike incapable of imagining: a system not mine, nor Kant’s, nor Comte’s;—but that

which Heaven has taught every true man's heart, and proved by every true man's work, from the beginning of time to this day.

I use the word 'Heaven' here in an absolutely literal sense, meaning the blue sky, and the light and air of it. Men who live in that light,—“in pure sunshine, not under mixed-up shade,”—and whose actions are open as the air, always arrive at certain conditions of moral and practical loyalty, which are wholly independent of religious opinion. These, it has been the first business of *Fors* to declare. Whether there be one God or three,—no God, or ten thousand,—children should have enough to eat, and their skins should be washed clean. It is not *I* who say that. Every mother's heart under the sun says that, if she has one.

Again, whether there be saints in Heaven or not, as long as its stars shine on the sea, and the thunnies swim there—every fisherman who drags a net ashore is bound to say to as many human creatures as he can, ‘Come and dine.’ And the fishmongers who destroy their fish by cartloads that they may make the poor pay dear for what is left, ought to be flogged round Billingsgate, and out of it. It is not *I* who say that. Every man's heart on sea and shore says that—if he isn't at heart a rascal. Whatever is dictated in *Fors* is dictated thus by common sense, common equity, common humanity, and common sunshine—not by me.

But farther. I have just now used the word 'Heaven'

in a nobler sense also : meaning, Heaven and our Father therein.

And beyond the power of its sunshine, which all men may know, Fors has declared also the power of its Fatherhood,—which only some men know, and others do not,—and, except by rough teaching, may not. For the wise of all the earth have said in their hearts always, “God is, and there is none beside Him;” and the fools of all the earth have said in their hearts always, “I am, and there is none beside me.”

Therefore, beyond the assertion of what is visibly salutary, Fors contains also the assertion of what is invisibly salutary, or salvation-bringing, in Heaven, to all men who will receive such health : and beyond this an invitation—passing gradually into an imperious call—to all men who trust in God, that they purge their conscience from dead works, and join together in work separated from the fool’s ; pure, undefiled, and worthy of Him they trust in.

But in the third place. Besides these definitions, first, of what is useful to all the world, and then of what is useful to the wiser part of it, Fors contains much trivial and desultory talk by the way. Scattered up and down in it,—perhaps by the Devil’s sowing tares among the wheat,—there is much casual expression of my own personal feelings and faith, together with bits of autobiography, which were allowed place, not without some notion of their being useful, but yet

imprudently, and even incontinently, because I could not at the moment hold my tongue about what vexed or interested me, or returned soothingly to my memory.

Now these personal fragments must be carefully sifted from the rest of the book, by readers who wish to understand it, and taken within their own limits,—no whit farther. For instance, when I say that “St. Ursula sent me a flower with her love,” it means that I myself am in the habit of thinking of the Greek Persephone, the Latin Proserpina, and the Gothic St. Ursula, as of the same living spirit; and so far regulating my conduct by that idea as to dedicate my book on Botany to Proserpina; and to think, when I want to write anything pretty about flowers, how St. Ursula would like it said. And when on the Christmas morning in question, a friend staying in Venice brought me a pot of pinks, ‘with St. Ursula’s love,’ the said pot of pinks did afterwards greatly help me in my work;—and reprove me afterwards, in its own way, for the failure of it.

All this effort, or play, of personal imagination is utterly distinct from the teaching of Fors, though I thought at the time its confession innocent, without in any wise advising my readers to expect messages from pretty saints, or reprobation from pots of pinks: only being urgent with them to ascertain clearly in their own minds what they *do* expect comfort or reproof from. Here, for instance, (Sheffield, 12th February,) 

I am lodging at an honest and hospitable grocer's, who has lent me his own bedroom, of which the principal ornament is a card printed in black and gold, sacred to the memory of his infant son, who died aged fourteen months, and whose tomb is represented under the figure of a broken Corinthian column, with two graceful-winged ladies putting garlands on it. He is comforted by this conception, and, in that degree, believes and feels with me: the merely palpable fact is probably, that his child's body is lying between two tall chimneys which are covering it gradually with cinders. I am quite as clearly aware of that fact as the most scientific of my friends; and can probably see more in the bricks of the said chimneys than they. But if they can see nothing in Heaven above the chimney tops, nor conceive of anything in spirit greater than themselves, it is not because they have more knowledge than I, but because they have less sense.

Less *common-sense*,—observe: less practical insight into the things which are of instant and constant need to man.

I must yet allow myself a few more words of autobiography touching this point. The doctors said that I went mad, this time two years ago, from overwork. I had not been then working more than usual, and what was usual with me had become easy. But I went mad because nothing came of my work. People would have understood my falling crazy if they had heard that

the manuscripts on which I had spent seven years of my old life had all been used to light the fire with, like Carlyle's first volume of the French Revolution. But they could not understand that I should be the least annoyed, far less fall ill in a frantic manner, because, after I had got them published, nobody believed a word of them. Yet the first calamity would only have been misfortune,—the second (the enduring calamity under which I toil) is humiliation,—resisted necessarily by a dangerous and lonely pride.

I spoke just now of the 'wounds' of which that fire in the flesh came; and if any one ask me faithfully, what the wounds were, I can faithfully give the answer of Zechariah's silenced messenger, "Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends." All alike, in whom I had most trusted for help, failed me in this main work: some mocked at it, some pitied, some rebuked,—all stopped their ears at the cry: and the solitude at last became too great to be endured. I tell this now, because I must say some things that grieve me to say, about the recent work of one of the friends from whom I had expected most sympathy and aid,—the historian J. A. Froude. Faithful, he, as it appeared to me, in all the intent of history: already in the year 1858 shrewdly cognizant of the main facts (with which he alone professed himself concerned) of English life past and present; keenly also, and impartially, sympathetic with every kind of heroism,

and mode of honesty. Of him I first learned the story of Sir Richard Grenville ; by him was directed to the diaries of the sea captains in Hakluyt ; by his influence, when he edited Fraser's Magazine, I had been led to the writing of *Munera Pulveris* : his Rectorial address at St. Andrew's was full of insight into the strength of old Scotland ; his study of the life of Hugo of Lincoln, into that of yet elder England ; and every year, as Auld Reekie and old England sank farther out of memory and honour with others, I looked more passionately for some utterance from him, of noble story about the brave and faithful dead, and noble wrath against the wretched and miscreant dead-alive. But year by year his words have grown more hesitating and helpless. The first preface to his history is a quite masterly and exhaustive summary of the condition and laws of England before the Reformation ; and it most truly introduces the following book as a study of the process by which that condition and those laws were turned upside-down, and inside-out, "as a man wipeth a dish,—wiping it, and turning it upside-down ;" so that, from the least thing to the greatest, if our age is light, those ages were dark ; if our age is right, those ages were wrong,—and *vice versa*. There is no possible consent to be got, or truce to be struck, between them. Those ages were feudal, ours free ; those reverent, ours impudent ; those artful, ours mechanical : the consummate and exhaustive difference being that the creed of the Dark Ages was,

"I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth;" and the creed of the Light Ages has become, 'I believe in Father Mud, the Almighty Plastic; and in Father Dollar, the Almighty Drastic.'

Now at the time when Mr. Froude saw and announced the irreconcilableness of these two periods, and then went forward to his work on that time of struggling twilight which foretold the existing blaze of day, and general detection of all impostures, he had certainly not made up his mind whether he ought finally to praise the former or the latter days. His reverence for the righteousness of old English law holds staunch, even to the recognition of it in the most violent states of—literal—ebullition: such, for instance, as the effective check given to the introduction of the arts of Italian poisoning into England, by putting the first English cook who practised them into a pot of convenient size, together with the requisite quantity of water, and publicly boiling him,—a most concise and practical method. Also he rejoices in the old English detestation of idleness, and determination that every person in the land should have a craft to live by, and practise it honestly: and in manifold other matters I perceive the backward leaning of his inmost thoughts; and yet in the very second page of this otherwise grand preface, wholly in contravention of his own principle that the historian has only to do with facts, he lets slips this—conciliating is it? or

careless? or really intended?—in any case amazing—sentence, “A condition of things” (the earlier age) “differing both outwardly and inwardly from that *into which a happier fortune has introduced ourselves.*” An amazing sentence, I repeat, in its triple assumptions,—each in itself enormous: the first, that it is happier to live without, than with, the fear of God; the second, that it is chance, and neither our virtue nor our wisdom, that has procured us this happiness;—the third, that the ‘ourselves’ of Onslow Gardens and their neighbourhood may sufficiently represent also the ourselves of Siberia and the Rocky Mountains—of Afghanistan and Zululand.

None of these assumptions have foundation; and for fastening the outline of their shadowy and meteoric form, Mr. Froude is working under two deadly disadvantages. Intensely loving and desiring Truth before all things, nor without sympathy even for monkish martyrs,—see the passage last quoted in my last written *Fors*, p. 91,—he has yet allowed himself to slip somehow into the notion that Protestantism and the love of Truth are synonymous;—so that, for instance, the advertisements which decorate in various fresco the station of the Great Northern Railway, and the newspapers vended therein to the passengers by the morning train, appear to him treasures of human wisdom and veracity, as compared with the benighted ornamentation of the useless Lesche of Delphi, or the fanciful stains

on the tunnel roof of the Lower Church of Assisi. And this the more, because, for second deadly disadvantage, he has no knowledge of art, nor care for it; and therefore, in his life of Hugo of Lincoln, passes over the Bishop's designing and partly building, its cathedral, with a word, as if he had been no more than a woodman building a hut: and in his recent meditations at St. Albans, he never puts the primal question concerning those long cliffs of abbey-wall, how the men who thought of them and built them, differed, in make and build of soul, from the apes who can only pull them down and build bad imitations of them: but he fastens like a remora on the nearer, narrower, copper-coating of fact—that countless bats and owls did at last cluster under the abbey-eaves; fact quite sufficiently known before now, and loudly enough proclaimed to the votaries of the Goddess of Reason, round *her* undefiled altars. So that there was not the slightest need for Mr. Froude's sweeping out these habitations of doleful creatures. Had he taken an actual broom of resolutely bound birch twigs, and, in solemn literalness of act, swept down the wrecked jackdaws' nests, which at this moment make a slippery dunhill-slope, and mere peril of spiral perdition, out of what was once the safe and decent staircase of central Canterbury tower, he would have better served his generation. But after he had, to his own satisfaction, sifted the mass of bone-dust, and got at the worst that could be seen or smelt in

the cells of monks, it was next, and at least, his duty, as an impartial historian, to compare with them the smells of modern unmonastic cells; (unmonastic, that is to say, in their scorn of sculpture and painting,—monastic enough in their separation of life from life). Yielding no whit to Mr. Froude in love of Fact and Truth, I will place beside his picture of the monk's cell, in the Dark Ages, two or three pictures by eye-witnesses—yes, and by line-and-measure witnesses—of the manufacturer's cell, in the happier times “to which Fortune has introduced ourselves.” I translate them (nearly as *Fors* opens the pages to me) from M. Jules Simon's ‘*L'Ouvrière*,’ a work which I recommend in the most earnest manner, as a text-book for the study of French in young ladies' schools. It must, however, be observed, prefatory, that these descriptions were given in 1864; and I have no doubt that as soon as this *Fors* is published, I shall receive indignant letters from all the places named in the extracts, assuring me that nothing of the sort exists there now. Of which letters I must also say, in advance, that I shall take no notice; being myself prepared, on demand, to furnish any quantity of similar pictures, seen with my own eyes, in the course of a single walk with a policeman through the back streets of any modern town which has fine front ones. And I take M. Jules Simon's studies from life merely because it gives me less trouble to translate them than to write fresh ones myself. But I think it probable

that they *do* indicate the culminating power of the manufacturing interest in causing human degradation ; and that things may indeed already be in some struggling initial state of amendment. What things *were*, at their worst, and were virtually *everywhere*, I record as a most important contribution to the History of France, and Europe, in the words of an honourable and entirely accurate and trustworthy Frenchman.

"Elboeuf, where the industrial prosperity is so great, ought to have healthy lodgings. It is a quite new town, and one which may easily extend itself upon the hills (*coteaux*) which surround it. We find already, in effect, *jusqu'à mi-côte* (I don't know what that means, —half-way up the hill ?), beside a little road bordered by smiling shrubs, some small houses built without care and without intelligence by little speculators scarcely less wretched than the lodgers they get together"—(this sort of landlord is one of the worst modern forms of Centaur,—half usurer, half gambler). "You go up two or three steps made of uncut stones" (none the worse for that though, M. Jules Simon), "and you find yourself in a little room lighted by one narrow window, and of which the four walls of earth have never been whitewashed nor rough-cast. Some half-rotten oak planks thrown down on the soil pretend to be a flooring. Close to the road, an old woman pays sevenpence half-penny a week," (sixty-five centimes,—roughly, forty francs, or thirty shillings a year,) "for a mud hut which is

literally naked—neither bed, chair, nor table in it (*c'est en demeurer confondu*). She sleeps upon a little straw, too rarely renewed ; while her son, who is a labourer at the port, sleeps at night upon the damp ground, without either straw or covering. At some steps farther on, a little back from the road, a weaver, sixty years old, inhabits a sort of hut or sentry-box, (for one does not know what name to give it,) of which the filth makes the heart sick" (he means the stomach too—*fait soulever le cœur*). "It is only a man's length, and a yard and a quarter broad ; he has remained in it night and day for twenty years. He is now nearly an idiot, and refuses to occupy a better lodging which one proposes to him.

"The misery is not less horrible, and it is much more general, at Rouen. One cannot form an idea of the filth of certain houses without having seen it. The poor people feed their fire with the refuse of the apples which have served to make cider, and which they get given them for nothing. They have quantities of them in the corner of their rooms, and a hybrid vegetation comes out of these masses of vegetable matter in putrefaction. Sometimes the proprietors, ill paid, neglect the most urgent repairs. In a garret of the Rue des Matelas, the floor, entirely rotten, trembles under the step of the visitor ; at two feet from the door is a hole larger than the body of a man. The two unhappy women who live there are obliged to cry to you to take care, for

they have not anything to put over the hole, not even the end of a plank. There is nothing in their room but their spinning-wheel, two low chairs, and the wrecks of a wooden bedstead without a mattress. In a blind alley at the end of the Rue des Canettes, where the wooden houses seem all on the point of falling, a weaver of braces lodges with his family in a room two yards and a half broad by four yards and three-quarters long, measured on the floor; but a projection formed by the tunnels of the chimney of the lower stories, and all the rest, is so close to the roof that one cannot make three steps upright. When the husband, wife, and four children are all in it, it is clear that they cannot move. One will not be surprised to hear that the want of air and hunger make frequent victims in such a retreat (*reduit*). Of the four children which remained to them in April, 1860, two were dead three months afterwards. When they were visited in the month of April, the physician, M. Leroy, spoke of a ticket that he had given them the week before for milk. ‘She has drunk of it,’ said the mother, pointing to the eldest daughter, half dead, but who had the strength to smile. Hunger had reduced this child, who would have been beautiful, nearly to the state of a skeleton.

“The father of this poor family is a good weaver. He could gain in an ordinary mill from three to four francs a day, while he gains only a franc and a half in the brace manufactory. One may ask why he stays

**there.** Because at the birth of his last child he had no money at home, nor fire, nor covering, nor light, nor bread. He borrowed twenty francs from his patron, who is an honest man, and he cannot without paying his debt quit that workshop where his work nevertheless does not bring him enough to live on. It is clear that he will die unless some one helps him, but his family will be dead before him."

Think now, you sweet milkmaids of England whose face is your fortune, and you sweet demoiselles of France who are content, as girls should be, with breakfast of brown bread and cream, (read Scribe's little operetta, *La Demoiselle à Marier*),—think, I say, how, in this one,—even though she has had a cup of cold milk given her in the name of the Lord,—lying still there, "nearly a skeleton," that verse of the song of songs which is Solomon's, must take a new meaning for you: "We have a little sister, and she has no breasts: what shall we do for our sister in the day of her espousals?"

"For the cellars of Lille, those who defend them, were they of Lille itself, have not seen them. There remains one, No. 40 of the Rue des Etaques; the ladder applied against the wall to go down is in such a bad state that you will do well to go down slowly. There is just light enough to read at the foot of the ladder. One cannot read there without compromising one's eyes: the work of sewing is therefore dangerous

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in that place; a step farther in, it is impossible, and the back of the cave is entirely dark. The soil is damp and unequal, the walls blackened by time and filth. One breathes a thick air which can never be renewed, because there is no other opening but the trap-door (*soupirail*). The entire space, three yards by four, is singularly contracted by a quantity of refuse of all sorts, shells of eggs, shells of mussels, crumbled ground and filth, worse than that of the dirtiest dunghill. It is easy to see that no one ever walks in this cave. Those who live in it lie down and sleep where they fall. The furniture is composed of a very small iron stove of which the top is shaped into a pan, three earthen pots, a stool, and the wood of a bed without any bedding. There is neither straw nor coverlet. The woman who lodges in the bottom of this cellar never goes out of it. She is sixty-three years old. The husband is not a workman: they have two daughters, of which the eldest is twenty-two years old. These four persons live together, and have no other domicile.

"This cave is one of the most miserable, first for the extreme filth and destitution of its inhabitants, next by its dimensions, most of the cellars being one or two yards wider. These caves serve for lodging to a whole family; in consequence, father, mother, and children sleep in the same place, and too often, whatever their age, in the same bed. The greater number of these unhappies see no mischief in this confusion of the

sexes; whatever comes of it, they neither conceal it, nor blush for it; nay, they scarcely know that the rest of mankind have other manners. Some of the caves, indeed, are divided in two by an arch, and thus admit of a separation which is not in general made. It is true that in most cases the back cellar is entirely dark, the air closer, and the stench more pestilent. In some the water trickles down the walls, and others are close to a gully-hole, and poisoned by mephitic vapours, especially in summer.

"There are no great differences between the so-called 'courettes' (little alleys) of Lille, and the so-called 'forts' of Roubaix, or the 'convents' of St. Quentin; everywhere the same heaping together of persons and the same unhealthiness. At Roubaix, where the town is open, space is not wanting, and all is new,—for the town has just sprung out of the ground,—one has not, as at Lille, the double excuse of a fortified town where space is circumscribed to begin with, and where one cannot build without pulling down. Also at Roubaix there are never enough lodgings for the increasing number of workmen, so that the landlords may be always sure of their rents. Quite recently, a manufacturer who wanted some hands brought some workwomen from Lille, paid them well, and put them in a far more healthy workshop than the one they had left. Nevertheless, coming on Thursday, they left him on Saturday; they had found no place to lodge, and had passed the

four nights under a gateway. In this open town, though its rows of lodgings are more than half a mile from the workshops, they are not a bit more healthy. The houses are ill-constructed, squeezed one against another, the ground between not levelled, and often with not even a gutter to carry away the thrown-out slops, which accumulate in stagnant pools till the sun dries them. Here at hazard is the description of some of the lodgings. To begin with a first floor in Wattel Street : one gets up into it by a ladder and a trap without a door ; space, two yards and a half by three yards ; one window, narrow and low ; walls not rough-cast ; inhabitants, father, mother, and two children of different sexes,—one ten, the other seventeen : rent, one franc a week. In Halluin Court there is a house with only two windows to its ground floor, one to the back and one to the front ; but this ground floor is divided into three separate lodgings, of which the one in the middle"—(thus ingeniously constructed in the age of light)—“would of course have no window at all, but it is separated from the back and front ones by two lattices, which fill the whole space, and give it the aspect of a glass cage. It results that the household placed in this lodging has no air, and that none of the three households have any privacy, for it is impossible for any person of them to hide any of his movements from the two others. One of these lodgings is let for five francs a month ; the woman who inhabits it has five children,

though all young, but she has got a sort of cage made in the angle of her room, which can be got up to by a winding staircase, and which can hold a bed. This the lodger has underlet, at seventy-five centimes a week, to a sempstress, abandoned by her lover, with a child of some weeks old. This child is laid on the bed, where it remains alone all the day, and the mother comes to suckle it at noon. A gown and a bonnet, with a little parcel which may contain, at the most, one chemise, are placed on a shelf, and above them an old silk umbrella—an object of great luxury, the *débris* of lost opulence. Nearly all the inhabitants of this court are subject to fever. If an epidemic came on the top of that, the whole population would be carried off. Yet it is not two years since Halluin Court was built."

Such, Mr. Froude, are the 'fortresses' of free—as opposed to feudal—barons ; such the 'convents' of philosophic—as opposed to catholic—purity. Will you not tell the happy world of your day, how it may yet be a little happier? It is wholly your business, not mine ;—and all these unwilling words of my tired lips are spoken only because *you* are silent.

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I do not propose to encumber the pages of the few last numbers of *Fors* with the concerns of St. George's Guild: of which the mustard-seed state (mingled hopefully however with that of cress) is scarcely yet overpast.

This slackness of growth, as I have often before stated, is more the Master's fault than any one else's, the present Master being a dilatory, dreamy, and—to the much vexation of the more enthusiastic members of the Guild—an extremely patient person; and busying himself at present rather with the things that amuse him in St. George's Museum than with the Guild's wider cares;—of which, however, a separate report will be given to its members in the course of this year, and continued as need is.

Many well-meaning and well-wishing friends outside the Guild, and desirous of entrance, have asked for relaxation of the grievous law concerning the contribution of the tithe of income. Which the Master is not, however, in the least minded to relax; nor any other of the Guild's original laws, none of which were set down without consideration, though this requirement of tithe does indeed operate as a most stiff stockade, and apparently unsurmountable hurdle-fence, in the face of all more or less rich and, so to speak, overweighted, well-wishers. For I find, practically, that fifty pounds a year can often save me five—or at a pinch, seven—of them; nor should I be the least surprised if some merry-hearted apprentice lad, starting in life with a capital of ten pounds or so, were to send me one of them, and go whistling on his way with the remaining nine. But that ever a man of ten thousand a year should contrive, by any exertion of prudence and self-denial, to live upon so

small a sum as nine thousand, and give one thousand to the poor,—this is a height of heroism wholly inconceivable to modern pious humanity.

Be that as it may, I am of course ready to receive subscriptions for St. George's work from outsiders—whether zealous or lukewarm—in such amounts as they think fit: and at present I conceive that the proposed enlargements of our museum at Sheffield are an object with which more frank sympathy may be hoped than with the agricultural business of the Guild. Ground I have, enough—and place for a pleasant gallery for such students as Sheffield may send up into the clearer light;\*—but I don't choose to sell out any of St. George's stock for this purpose, still less for the purchase of books for the Museum,—and yet there are many I want, and can't yet afford. Mr. Quaritch, for instance, has an eleventh century Lectionary, a most precious MS., which would be a foundation for all manner of good learning to us: but it is worth its weight in silver, and inaccessible for the present. Also my casts from St. Mark's, of sculptures never cast before, are lying in lavender—or at least in tow—invisible and useless, till I can build walls for them: and I think the British public would not regret giving me the means of placing and illuminating these rightly. And, in fine, here I am yet for a few

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\* An excellent and kind account of the present form and contents of the Museum will be found in the last December number of Cassell's Magazine of Art.

years, I trust, at their service—ready to arrange such a museum for their artizans as they have not yet dreamed of ;—not dazzling nor overwhelming, but comfortable, useful, and—in such sort as smoke-cumbered skies may admit,—beautiful ; though not, on the outside, otherwise decorated than with plain and easily-worked slabs of Derbyshire marble, with which I shall face the walls, making the interior a working man's Bodleian Library, with cell and shelf of the most available kind, undisturbed, for his holiday time. The British public are not likely to get such a thing done by any one else for a time, if they don't get it done now by me, when I'm in the humour for it. Very positively I can assure them of that ; and so leave the matter to their discretion.

Many more serious matters, concerning the present day, I have in mind—and partly written, already ; but they must be left for next Fors, which will take up the now quite imminent question of Land, and its Holding, and Lordship.

# FORS CLAVIGERA.

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LETTERS

*TO THE WORKMEN AND LABOURERS  
OF GREAT BRITAIN.*

BY JOHN RUSKIN, LL.D.

*NEW SERIES.*

**LETTER THE FIFTH.**

SEPTEMBER 29, 1880.



GEORGE ALLEN,  
SUNNYSIDE, ORPINGTON, KENT.





# FORS CLAVIGERA.

## *SECOND SERIES.*

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“YEA, THE WORK OF OUR HANDS, ESTABLISH THOU IT.”

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TO THE TRADES UNIONS OF ENGLAND.

My dear Friends,

BEAUVAIIS, *August 31, 1880.*

This is the first letter in Fors which has been addressed to you as a body of workers separate from the other Englishmen who are doing their best, with heart and hand, to serve their country in any sphere of its business, and in any rank of its people. I have never before acknowledged the division marked, partly in your own imagination, partly in the estimate of others, and of late, too sadly, staked out in permanence by animosities and misunderstandings on both sides, between you, and the mass of society to which you look for employment. But I recognize the distinction to-day, moved, for one thing, by a kindly notice of last Fors, which appeared in the Bingley Telephone of April 23rd of this year ; saying, “that it was to be wished I would write more to and for the workmen and workwomen of these realms,” and influenced conclusively by the fact

of your having expressed by your delegates at Sheffield your sympathy with what endeavours I had made for the founding a Museum there different in principle from any yet arranged for working men: this formal recognition of my effort, on your part, signifying to me, virtually, that the time was come for explaining my aims to you, fully, and in the clearest terms possible to me.

But, believe me, there have been more reasons than I need now pass in review, for my hitherto silence respecting your special interests. Of which reasons, this alone might satisfy you, that, as a separate class, I knew scarcely anything of you but your usefulness, and your distress; and that the essential difference between me and other political writers of your day, is that I never say a word about a single thing that I don't know; while they never trouble themselves to know a single thing they talk of; but give you their own 'opinions' about it, or tell you the gossip they have heard about it, or insist on what they like in it, or rage against what they dislike in it; but entirely decline either to look at, or to learn, or to speak, the Thing as it is, and must be.

Now I know many things that are, and many that must be hereafter, concerning my own class: but I know nothing yet, practically, of yours, and could give you no serviceable advice either in your present disputes with your masters, or in your plans of education and action for yourselves, until I had found out more clearly, what

you meant by a Master, and what you wanted to gain either in education or action,—and, even farther, whether the kind of person you meant by a Master was one in reality or not, and the things you wanted to gain by your labour were indeed worth your having or not. So that nearly everything hitherto said in *Fors* has been addressed, in main thought, to your existing Masters, Pastors, and Princes,—not to you,—though these all I class with you, if they knew it, as “workmen and labourers,” and you with them, if *you* knew it, as capable of the same joys as they, tempted by the same passions as they, and needing, for your life, to recognize the same Father and Father’s Law over you all, as brothers in earth and in heaven.

But there was another, and a more sharply restrictive reason for my never, until now, addressing you as a distinct class ;—namely, that certain things which I knew positively must be soon openly debated—and what is more, determined—in a manner very astonishing to some people, in the natural issue of the transference of power out of the hands of the upper classes, so called, into yours,—transference which has been compelled by the crimes of those upper classes, and accomplished by their follies,—these certain things, I say, coming now first into fully questionable shape, could not be openly announced as subjects of debate by any man in my then official position as one of a recognized body of University teachers, without rendering him suspected and disliked

by a large body of the persons with whom he had to act. And I considered that in accepting such a position at all I had virtually promised to teach nothing contrary to the principles on which the Church and the Schools of England believed themselves—whether mistakenly or not—to have been founded.

The pledge was easy to me, because I love the Church and the Universities of England more faithfully than most churchmen, and more proudly than most collegians; though my pride is neither in my college boat, nor my college plate, nor my college class-list, nor my college heresy. I love both the Church and the schools of England, for the sake of the brave and kindly men whom they have hitherto not ceased to send forth into all lands, well nurtured, and bringing, as a body, wherever their influence extended, order and charity into the ways of mortals.

And among these I had hoped long since to have obtained hearing, not for myself, but for the Bible which their Mothers revered, the laws which their Fathers obeyed, and the wisdom which the Masters of all men—the dead Senate of the noblest among the nations—had left for the guidance of the ages yet to be. And during seven years I went on appealing to my fellow-scholars, in words clear enough to them, though not to you, had they chosen to hear: but not one cared nor listened, till I had sign sternly given to me that my message to the learned and the rich was given, and ended.

And now I turn to you, understanding you to be associations of labouring men who have recognized the necessity of binding yourselves by some common law of action, and who are taking earnest counsel as to the conditions of your lives here in England, and their relations to those of your fellow-workers in foreign lands. And I understand you to be, in these associations, disregardant, if not actually defiant, of the persons on whose capital you have been hitherto passively dependent for occupation, and who have always taught you, by the mouths of their appointed Economists, that they and their capital were an eternal part of the Providential arrangements made for this world by its Creator.

In which self-assertion, nevertheless, and attitude of inquiry into the grounds of this statement of theirs, you are unquestionably right. For, as things are nowadays, you know any pretty lady in the Elysian fields of Paris who can set a riband of a new colour in her cap in a taking way, forthwith sets a few thousands of Lyonnaise spinners and dyers furiously weaving ribands of like stuff, and washing them with like dye. And in due time the new French edict reaches also your sturdy English mind, and the steeples of Coventry ring in the reign of the elect riband, and the Elysian fields of Spital, or whatever other hospice now shelters the weaver's head, bestir themselves according to the French pattern, and bedaub themselves with the French dye; and the pretty lady thinks herself your everlasting benefactress, and little

short of an angel sent from heaven to feed you with miraculous manna, and you are free Britons that rule the waves, and free Frenchmen that lead the universe, of course ; but you have not a bit of land you can stand on—without somebody's leave, nor a house for your children that they can't be turned out of, nor a bit of bread for their breakfast to-morrow, but on the chance of some more yards of riband being wanted. Nor have you any notion that the pretty lady herself can be of the slightest use to you, except as a consumer of ribands ; what God made *her* for—you do not ask : still less she, what God made *you* for.

How many are there of you, I wonder, landless, roofless, foodless, unless, for such work as they choose to put you to, the upper classes provide you with cellars in Lille, glass cages in Halluin Court, milk tickets, for which your children still have “the strength to smile”—\* How many of you, tell me,—and what your united hands and wits are worth, at your own reckoning ?

Trade Unions of England—Trade Armies of Christendom, what's the roll-call of you, and what part or lot have you, hitherto, in this Holy Christian Land of your Fathers? Is not that inheritance to be claimed, and the Birth Right of it, no less than the Death Right? Will you not determine where you may be Christianly bred, before you set your blockhead Parliaments to debate where you may be Christianly buried, (your priests also

\* See *Fors* for March of this year, p. 118, with the sequel.

all a-squabble about that matter, as I hear,—as if any ground could be consecrated that had the bones of rascals in it, or profane where a good man slept!) But how the Earth that you tread may be consecrated to you, and the roofs that shade your breathing sleep, and the deeds that you do with the breath of life yet strengthening hand and heart,—this it is your business to learn, if you know not; and this, mine to tell you, if you will learn.

Before the close of last year, one of our most earnest St. George's Guildsmen wrote to me saying that the Irish Land League claimed me as one of their supporters; and asking if he should contradict this, or admit it.

To whom I answered, on Christmas Day of 1879, as follows:—

“ BRANTWOOD, *Christmas, '79.*

“ You know I never read papers, so I have never seen a word of the Irish Land League or its purposes; but I assume the purpose to be—that Ireland should belong to Irishmen; which is not only a most desirable, but, ultimately, a quite inevitable condition of things,—that being the assured intention of the Maker of Ireland, and all other lands.

“ But as to the manner of belonging, and limits and rights of holding, there is a good deal more to be found out of the intentions of the Maker of Ireland, than I fancy the Irish League is likely to ascertain, without rueful

experience of the consequences of any and all methods contrary to those intentions.

"And for my own part I should be wholly content to confine the teaching—as I do the effort—of the St. George's Guild, to the one utterly harmless and utterly wholesome principle, that land, by whomsoever held, is to be made the most of, by human strength, and not defiled,\* nor left waste. But since we live in an epoch assuredly of change, and too probably of Revolution; and thoughts which cannot be put aside are in the minds of all men capable of thought, I am obliged also to affirm the one principle which can—and in the end will—close all epochs of Revolution,—that each man shall possess the ground he can use—and no more,—USE, I say, either for food, beauty, exercise, science, or any other sacred purpose. That each man shall *possess*, for his own, no more than such portion, with the further condition that it descends to his son, inalienably—right of primogeniture being in this matter eternally sure. The nonsense talked about division is all temporary; you can't divide for ever, and when you have got down to a cottage and a square fathom—if you allow division so far—still primogeniture will hold the right of that.

\* And if not the land, still less the water. I have kept by me now for some years, a report on the condition of the Calder, drawn up by Mr. James Fowler, of Wakefield, in 1866, and kindly sent to me by the author on my mention of Wakefield in *Fors*. I preserve it in these pages, as a piece of English History characteristic to the uttermost of our Fortunate Times. See appendix to this number.

“ But though *possession* is, and must be, limited by use (see analytic passages on this head in ‘Munera Pulveris’), Authority is not. And first the Maker of the Land, and then the King of the Land, and then the Overseers of the Land appointed by the King, in their respective orders, must all in their ranks control the evil, and promote the good work of the possessors. Thus far, you will find already, all is stated in Fors ; and *further*, the right of every man to possess so much land as he can *live* on —especially observe the meaning of the developed Corn Law Rhyme

“ Find’st thou rest for England’s head  
Free alone among the Dead ?” \*

meaning that Bread, Water, and the Roof over his head, must be tax- (*i.e.* rent-) free to every man.

“ But I have never yet gone on in Fors to examine the possibly best forms of practical administration. I always felt it would be wasted time, for these *must* settle themselves. In Savoy the cottager has his garden and field, and labours with his family only ; in Berne, the farm labourers of a considerable estate live under the master’s roof, and are strictly domestic ; in England, farm labourers might probably with best comfort live in detached cottages ; in Italy, they might live in a kind of monastic fraternity. All this, circumstance, time, and national character must determine ; the one thing St.

\* See ‘Fors,’ Letter lxxiv. p. 36 (note).

George affirms is the duty of the master in every case to make the lives of his dependants noble to the best of his power."

Now you must surely feel that the questions I have indicated in this letter could only be answered rightly by the severest investigation of the effect of each mode of human life suggested, as hitherto seen in connection with other national institutions, and hereditary customs and character. Yet every snipping and scribbling block-head hired by the bookseller to paste newspaper paragraphs into what may sell for a book, has his 'opinion' on these things, and will announce it to you as the new gospel of eternal and universal salvation—without a qualm of doubt—or of shame—in the entire loggerhead of him.

Hear, for instance, this account of the present prosperity, and of its causes, in the country of those Sea Kings who taught you your own first trades of fishing and battle :—

"The Norwegian peasant is a free man on the scanty bit of ground which he has inherited from his fathers; and he has all the virtues of a freeman—an open character, a mind clear of every falsehood, an hospitable heart for the stranger. His religious feelings are deep and sincere, and the Bible is to be found in every hut. He is said to be indolent and phlegmatic; but when necessity urges, he sets vigorously to work, and never ceases till his task is done. His courage and his patriotism are abundantly proved by a history of a thousand years.

"Norway owes her present prosperity chiefly to her liberal

constitution. The press is completely free, and the power of the king extremely limited. All privileges and hereditary titles are abolished. The Parliament, or the 'Storthing,' which assembles every three years, consists of the 'Odelthing,' or Upper House, and of the 'Logthing,' or Legislative Assembly. Every new law requires the royal sanction; but if the 'Storthing' has voted it in three successive sittings, it is definitely adopted in spite of the royal veto. Public education is admirably cared for. There is an elementary school in every village; and where the population is too thinly scattered, the schoolmaster may truly be said to be abroad, as he wanders from farm to farm, so that the most distant families have the benefit of his instruction. Every town has its public library; and in many districts the peasants annually contribute a dollar towards a collection of books, which, under the care of the priest, is lent out to all subscribers.

"No Norwegian is confirmed who does not know how to read, and no Norwegian is allowed to marry who has not been confirmed. He who attains his twentieth year without having been confirmed, has to fear the House of Correction. Thus ignorance is punished as a crime in Norway, an excellent example for far richer and more powerful governments."

I take this account from a book on the Arctic regions, in which I find the facts collected extremely valuable, the statements, as far as I can judge, trustworthy, the opinions and teachings—what you can judge of by this specimen. Do you think the author wise in attributing the prosperity of Norway chiefly to her king's being crippled, and her newspapers free? or that perhaps her thousand years of courage may have some share in the matter? and her mind clear of every falsehood? and her way of never ceasing in a task till it is done? and her circulating

schoolmasters? and her collected libraries? and her preparation for marriage by education? and her House of Correction for the uneducated? and her Bible in every hut? and, finally, her granted piece of his native land under her peasant's foot for his own? Is her strength, think you, in any of these things, or only in the abolition of hereditary titles, the letting loose of her news-mongers, and the binding of her king? *Date* of their modern constitutional measures, you observe, not given! and consequences, perhaps, scarcely yet conclusively ascertainable. If you cannot make up your own minds on one or two of these open questions, suppose you were to try an experiment or two? Your scientific people will tell you—and this, at least, truly—that they cannot find out anything without experiment: you may also in political matters think and talk for ever—resultlessly. Will you never try what comes of Doing a thing for a few years, perseveringly, and keep the result of that, at least, for known?

Now I write to you, observe, without knowing, except in the vaguest way, who you *are!*—what trades you belong to, what arts or crafts you practise—or what ranks of workmen you include, and what manner of idlers you exclude. I have no time to make out the different sets into which you fall, or the different interests by which you are guided. But I know perfectly well what sets you *should* fall into, and by what interests you *should* be guided. And you will find your profit in listening while

I explain these to you somewhat more clearly than your  
penny-a-paragraph liberal papers will.

In the first place, what business have you to call yourselves only *Trade* Guilds, as if 'trade' and not production, were your main concern? Are you by profession nothing more than pedlars and mongers of things, or are you also makers of things?

It is too true that in our City wards our chapmen have become the only dignitaries—and we have the Merchant-Tailors' Company, but not the plain Tailors; and the Fishmongers' Company, but not the Fishermen's; and the Vintners' Company, but not the Vinedressers; and the Ironmongers' Company, but not the Blacksmiths'; while, though, for one apparent exception, the Goldsmiths' Company proclaims itself for masters of a craft, what proportion, think you, does its honour bear compared with that of the Calf-worshipful Guild of the Gold Mongers?

Be it far from me to speak scornfully of trade. My Father—whose Charter of Freedom of London Town I keep in my Brantwood treasury beside missal and cross—sold good wine, and had, over his modest door in Billiter Street, no bush. But he grew his wine, before he sold it; and could answer for it with his head, that no rotten grapes fermented in his vats, and no chemist's salt effervesced in his bottles. Be you also Tradesmen—in your place—and in your right; but be you, primarily, Growers, Makers, Artificers, Inventors, of things good and precious. What talk you of Wages? Whose is the Wealth

of the World but yours? Whose is the Virtue? Do you mean to go on for ever, leaving your wealth to be consumed by the idle, and your virtue to be mocked by the vile?

The wealth of the world is yours; even your common rancor and rabble of economists tell you that—"no wealth without industry." Who robs you of it, then, or beguiles you? Whose fault is it, you clothmakers, that any English child is in rags? Whose fault is it, you shoemakers, that the street harlots mince in high-heeled shoes, and your own babes paddle barefoot in the street slime? Whose fault is it, you bronzed husbandmen, that through all your furrowed England, children are dying of famine? Primarily, of course, it is your clergymen's and masters' fault: but also in this your own, that you never educate any of your children with the earnest object of enabling them to see their way out of this, not by rising above their father's business, but by setting in order what was amiss in it: also in this your own, that none of you who do rise above your business, ever seem to keep the memory of what wrong they have known, or suffered; nor, as masters, set a better example than others.

*Your own* fault, at all events, it will be now, seeing that you have got Parliamentary power in your hands, if you cannot use it better than the moribund Parliamentary body has done hitherto.

To which end, I beg you first to take these following truths into your good consideration.

First. Men don't and can't live by exchanging articles but by producing them. They don't live by trade, but by work. Give up that foolish and vain title of Trades Unions ; and take that of Labourers' Unions.

And, whatever divisions chance or special need may have thrown you into at present, remember, there are essential and eternal divisions of the Labour of man, into which you *must* practically fall, whether you like it or not ; and these eternal classifications it would be infinitely better if you at once acknowledged in thought, name, and harmonious action. Several of the classes may take finer divisions in their own body, but you will find the massive general structure of working humanity range itself under these following heads, the first eighteen assuredly essential ; the three last, making twenty-one altogether, I shall be able, I think, to prove to you are not superfluous :—suffer their association with the rest in the meantime.

1. Shepherds.
2. Fishermen.
3. Ploughmen.
4. Gardeners.
5. Carpenters and Woodmen.
6. Builders and Quarrymen.
7. Shipwrights.
8. Smiths and Miners.\*
9. Bakers and Millers.
10. Vintners.

\* See note in Appendix II.

11. Graziers and Butchers.
12. Spinners.
13. Linen and Cotton-workers.
14. Silk-workers.
15. Woollen-workers.
16. Tanners and Furriers.
17. Tailors and Milliners.
18. Shoemakers.
19. Musicians.
20. Painters.
21. Goldsmiths.

Get these eighteen, or twenty-one, as you like to take them, each thoroughly organized, proud of their work, and doing it under masters, if any, of their own rank, chosen for their sagacity and vigour, and the world is yours, and all the pleasures of it, that are true; while all false pleasures in such a life fall transparent, and the hooks are seen through the baits of them. But for the organization of these classes, you see there must be a certain quantity of land available to them, proportioned to their multitude: and without the possession of that, nothing can be done ultimately; though at present the mere organization of your masses under these divisions will clear the air, and the field, for you, to astonishment.

And for the possession of the land, mind you, if you try to take it by force, you will have every blackguard and vaut-rien in the world claiming his share of it with you,—for by that law of force he has indeed as much

right to it as you ; but by the law of labour, he has not. Therefore you must get your land by the law of labour ; working for it, saving for it, and buying it, as the spend-thrifts and idlers offer it you : but buying never to let go.

And this, therefore, is practically the first thing you have to bring in by your new Parliaments—a system of land tenure, namely, by which your organized classes of labouring men may possess their land as corporate bodies, and add to it—as the monks once did, and as every single landlord can, now ; but I find that my St. George's Guild cannot, except through complications or legal equivocations almost endless, and hitherto indeed paralyzing me in quite unexpectedly mean and miserable ways.

Now I hope all this has been clearly enough said, for once : and it shall be farther enforced and developed as you choose, if you will only tell me by your chosen heads whether you believe it, and are any of you prepared to act on it, and what kinds of doubt or difficulty occur to you about it, and what farther questions you would like me to answer.

And that you may have every power of studying the matter (so far as *I* am concerned), *this* Fors you shall have gratis ;—and the next, if you enable me to make it farther useful to you. That is to say, your committees of each trade-guild may order parcels of them from my publisher in any quantities they wish, for distribution among their members. To the public its price remains fixed, as that of all my other books. One word only let

me say in conclusion, to explain at once what I mean by saying that the pleasures of the world are all yours.

God has made man to take pleasure in the use of his eyes, wits, and body. And the foolish creature is continually trying to live without looking at anything, without thinking about anything, and without doing anything. And he thus becomes not only a brute, but the unhappiest of brutes. All the lusts and lazinesses he can contrive only make him more wretched ; and at this moment, if a man walks watchfully the streets of Paris, whence I am now writing to you,—a city in which every invention that science, wit, and wealth can hit upon to provoke and to vary the pleasures of the idle,—he will not see one happy or tranquil face, except among the lower and very hard-labouring classes. Every pleasure got otherwise than God meant it—got cheaply, thievishly, and swiftly, when He has ordered that it should be got dearly, honestly, and slowly,—turns into a venomous burden, and, past as a pleasure, remains as a load, increasing day by day its deadly coat of burning mail. The joys of hatred, of battle, of lust, of vain knowledge, of vile luxury, all pass into slow torture : nothing remains to man, nothing is possible to him of true joy, but in the righteous love of his fellows ; in the knowledge of the laws and the glory of God, and in the daily use of the faculties of soul and body with which that God has endowed him.

PARIS, 18th September, 1880.

## NOTES AND CORRESPONDENCE.

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"JOHN RUSKIN, Esq.

"Dear Sir,—May I take an advantage of this note, and call your attention to a fact of much importance to Englishmen, and it is this. On reference to some Freethought papers—notably, the 'National Reformer'—I find a movement on foot amongst the **Atheists**, vigorous and full of life, for the alteration of the Land **Laws** in our much-loved country. It is a movement of much moment, and likely to lead to great results. The first great move on the part of Charles Bradlaugh, the premier in the matter, is the calling of a Conference to discuss the whole question. The meeting is to be attended by all the National Secular Society's branches throughout the empire; representatives of nearly every Reform Association in England, Scotland, and Ireland; delegations from banded bodies of workmen, colliers, etc.,—such as the important band of Durham miners—trade unionists; and, in fact, a most weighty representative Conference will be gathered together. I am, for many reasons, grieved and shocked to find the cry for Reform coming with *such a heading* to the front. Where are our statesmen,—*our clergy*? The terrible crying evils of our land system are coming to the front in our politics without the help of the so-called upper classes; nay, with a deadly hatred of any disturbance in that direction, our very clergy are taking up arms against the popular cry.

"Only a week ago I was spending a few days with a farmer near Chester, and learned to my sorrow and dismay that the Dean and Chapter of that city, who own most of the farms, etc.,

in the district wherein my friend resides, refuse now—and only now—to accept other than *yearly* tenants for these farms, have raised all the rents to an exorbitant pitch, and only allow the land to be sown with wheat, oats, or whatever else in seed, etc., on a personal inspection by their agent. The consequence of all this is, that poverty is prevailing to an alarming extent: the workers, all the bitter, hard toil; the clergy, one may say, *all* the profits. It is terrible, heart-breaking; I never longed so much for heart-searching, vivid eloquence, so that I might move men with an irresistible tongue to do the Right.

“I wonder how many of these great ones of our England have seen the following lines from Emerson; and yet what a lesson is contained in them!

‘God said, I am tired of kings,  
I suffer them no more;  
Up to my ear the morning brings  
The outrage of the poor.  
  
Lo ! I uncover the land  
Which I hid of old time in the West,  
As the sculptor uncovers the statue  
When he has wrought his best ;  
  
I show Columbia, of the rocks  
Which dip their foot in the seas,  
And soar to the air-borne flocks  
Of clouds, and the boreal fleece.  
  
I will divide my goods ;  
Call in the wretch and slave :  
None shall rule but the humble,  
And none but toil shall have.’

*Boston Hymn.*

“I can only pray and hope that some mighty pen as yours, if not yourself, may be moved to show Englishmen the right way before it is too late.      I have the honour to remain,

“Your obedient servant.”

"**MR. RUSKIN.**

"Dear Sir,—I have seen a letter from you to Mr. G. J. Holyoake, in which you say 'the only calamity which I perceive or dread for an Englishman is his becoming a rascal; and co-operation amongst rascals—if it were possible—would bring a curse. *Every year sees our workmen more eager to do bad work, and rob their customers on the sly.* All political movement among such animals I call essentially fermentation and putrefaction—not co-operation.'

"Now, sir, I see, I think, as completely and consequently as positively as you possibly can, the truth of your general statement—that is, that there is a widespread *tendency* and *habit* of producing work that has the appearance of being good when yet it is a fraud: its reality is not according to the appearance. But, sir, is the part that I have underlined correct? It is said that Lancashire sends to India calico with lime or paste put in it to make it feel stout;—is that the workman's fault?

"I myself am a workman in what is called fancy hosiery, and to get a living have to make a great quantity of work—in some instances turning very good wool into rubbish, when yet I know that it is capable of being made into very nice and serviceable clothing; but if I made it into anything of the sort I should be ruining my employer, because he could not sell it at a profit: something at four shillings, that should be fourteen, is what is required—I should like to see it stopped. How is it to be done?

"If you, sir, were to ask a merchant in these goods why they were not made better, more serviceable, and perfect, he would most certainly tell you that the *Germans* are in our market with enormous quantities of these goods at terribly low prices, and that he has no market for goods of superior quality and higher prices. I produced a great novelty about six years ago; it was a beautiful class of goods, and a vast trade came on in them; and now those goods are entirely run out in consequence of their being made worse, and still worse, till they were turned into

rubbish. Competition did that—‘fermentation and putrefaction;’ but I cannot see that the workman was to blame: he was ordered to do it.

“Yours most respectfully.”

(No answer to this is expected.)

Answer was sent, nevertheless; promising a more sufficient one in Fors; which may be briefly to the first question, “Is the part underlined correct?”—too sorrowfully, Yes; and to the second question—Is it the workman’s fault?—that the workman can judge of that, if he will, for himself. Answer at greater length will be given in next Fors.

“CRANLEIGH, SURREY, May 26th, 1880.

“Revered Sir,—You ask me how I came to be one of your pupils. I have always been fond of books, and in my reading I often saw your name; but one day, when reading a newspaper account of a book-sale, I saw that one of your books fetched £38 for the five volumes: I was struck with the amount, and thought that they must be worth reading; I made up my mind to find out more about them, and if possible to buy some. The next time I went to London I asked a bookseller to show me some of your works: he told me that he did not keep them. I got the same answer from about half a dozen more that I tried; but this only made me more determined to get them, and at last I found a bookseller who agreed to get me ‘Fors.’

“When I got it, I saw that I could get them from Mr. Allen. I have done so; and have now most of your works.

“I read ‘Fors’ with extreme interest, but it was a tough job for me, on account of the number of words in it that I had never met with before; and as I never had any schooling worth mentioning, I was obliged to look at my dictionaries pretty often: I think I have found out now the meanings of all the *English* words in it.

“I got more good and real knowledge from ‘Fors’ than from all the books put together that I had ever read.

"I am now trying to carry out your principles in my business, which is that of a grocer, draper, and clothier; in fact, my shop is supposed by the Crauleigh people to contain almost everything that folks require.

"I have always conducted my business honestly: it is not so difficult to do this in a village as it is in larger places. As far as I can see, *the larger the town the worse it is for the honest tradesman.* [Italics mine.—J. R.]

"The principal difference I make now in my business, since I read 'Fors,' is to recommend hand-made goods instead of machine-made. I am sorry to say that most of my customers will have the latter. I don't know what I can do further, as I am not the maker of the goods I sell, but only the distributor.

"If I understand your teaching, I ought to keep hand-made goods *only*,\* and those of the best quality obtainable. If I did this, I certainly should lose nearly all my trade; and as I have a family to support, I cannot do so. No; I shall stick to it, and sell as good articles as I can for the price paid, and tell my customers, as I always have done, that the best goods are the cheapest.

"I know you are right about the sin of usury. I have but little time to-day, but I will write to you again some day about this.

"I met with a word (*Adscititious*) in 'Carlyle,' I cannot find in any dictionaries that I can get at.

"I sent the minerals off yesterday packed in a box.† I am half-afraid now that you will not think them good enough for the Museum.

"Your grateful pupil,

JOHN RUSKIN, LL.D.

"STEPHEN ROWLAND.<sup>2</sup>

\* Answered—By no means, but to recommend them at all opportunities.

† A collection of English minerals and fossils presented by Mr. Rowland to St. George's museum, out of which I have chosen a series from the Clifton limestones for permanent arrangement.

## APPENDIX I.

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### MR. FOWLER'S REPORT ON THE CONDITION OF THE CALDER.

*Given in evidence before the Royal Commissioners at Wakefield, and published in their Report, page 17 (with some additions).*

It would be difficult to find a more striking instance than that afforded by the Calder, of the extent to which our rivers have been defiled by sewage and refuse from manufactorys. Its green banks and interesting scenery made it formerly a pleasant resort for the artizan and operative in hours of leisure, while its clear and sparkling waters invited the healthful recreations of boating, bathing, and fishing. "In 1826 the water was clear, and the bottom was free from mud ; it was a gravelly, sandy bottom, and I have frequently myself sent stones into it for boys to dive down after ; the water at a depth of seven or eight feet was sufficiently clear to distinguish stones at the bottom ; some of the streams running in, for instance the Alverthorpe Beck, at that time were full of fish ; there was a great deal of fish in the river. I have frequently seen kingfishers there, which shows the general clearness of the water."—*Extract from Mr. Milner's evidence*, p. 63. Pike of all sizes, trout up to three pounds in weight, salmon trout, dace, and bream were plentiful. Even so lately as within the last twenty years, any one with a fly might in an afternoon catch a basketful of chub, each weighing at least two or three pounds : and during freshes, with a cast net, very frequently ninety or a hundred, sometimes even a hundred and fifty pounds, of roach, chub, gudgeon, etc., were caught in an evening. On one occasion, where the water was let off from a quite short cutting belonging to the Calder and Hebble Navigation Company, at least four hundred and fifty pounds of eels were taken ; in fact, whenever any one wanted fish, a sackful might readily be obtained. Nothing

of this kind has been known, however, since the springing up of manufactories in the Vale of the Calder. Soon after the Thornes Soap Works were begun near Wakefield, many stones of fish, which had come up the river to spawn, were to be seen floating dead upon the surface. During that year all fish forsook this part of the stream as regular inhabitants. For some time after, however, during freshes, a fish was occasionally to be seen as a curiosity; and so lately as 1858, an experienced fisherman succeeded, on one of several persevering trials, in capturing two small chub.

At present, the condition of the river is most disgusting. Defiled almost from its source, it reaches us with the accumulated refuse of Todmorden, Hebden Bridge, Sowerby Bridge, Halifax, Elland, Brighouse, Cooper Bridge, Holmfirth, Huddersfield, Mirfield, Dewsbury, Earlsheaton, Thornhill, and Horbury. At the suspension bridge, about a mile and a half above Wakefield, it runs slowly, and in many places is almost stagnant. It has a bluish-black, dirty-slate colour; and a faint, nauseous smell, which leaves an extremely unpleasant impression for long after it has been once thoroughly perceived,—considerably worse than that made by the Thames after a stage on a penny boat. The banks and every twig and weed in reach are coated with soft, black slime or mud, which is studded on the edges of the stream with vivid patches of annelides. Above are overhanging willows; and where the branches of these touch the water, especially in any quiet pool, large sheets of thin bluish or yellowish green scum collects, undisturbed save by the rising to the surface of bubbles of fetid gas. Between this point and Wakefield, the refuse of extensive soap works and worsted mills enters, causing discolouration for several hundred yards. I have, in fact, traced large quantities of soap scum beyond Portobello, a distance of about half a mile. Nearer the town, quantities of refuse from large dye works are continually being discharged, to say nothing of the periodical emptying of spent liquor and vat sediments. *It is noteworthy that whereas formerly goods were brought to Wakefield to be dyed on account of the superiority of the water for the purpose, the trade has now left Wakefield to a considerable extent, and the Wakefield manufacturers have themselves to send away their finer goods from home to be dyed.* On the opposite side are two full streams, one of sewage, the other apparently from some cotton mills; and here it may be stated that the exact degree to which influxes of this kind injure in different cases is extremely difficult to estimate; some manufacturers using ammonia, while others adhere to the old-fashioned pigs' dung and putrid urine. The banks on each side are here studded with granaries and malting houses, from the latter of which is received that most pernicious contamination, the steep-liquor of malt. There is also the

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washed down from a higher source. Such is the case with the miscellaneous sediment dredged by the Calder and Hebble Navigation Company near the Wakefield dam, and with the shoal at Lupset pond above Wakefield ; an accumulation of ashes and dye-woods having risen in the latter situation during the last five or six years. Walking up the bank of the beck, one may form a fair idea of the kind of contamination received. Besides dead dogs, tin kettles, broken pots, old pans, boots, hats, etc., we find house-sinks and surface drains, public-house refuse and factors' privies flowing in unscrupulously. Myriads of annelides in the mud upon the banks subsist on the impurities ; that in the neighbourhood of a warm sewer being, in fact, for some distance entirely concealed by sheets of moving pink. A railway waggon-maker's establishment was a little while ago an artificial manure factory, and contributed greatly to the general pollution.

At the bottom of Thornhill Street are two strong foul streams, one of sewage, the other, on the day I visited it, discharging deep indigo-coloured stuff. Immediately above this the beck, though receiving muddy refuse from some cement works, was purple coloured, and where the branches of overhanging shrubs dipped beneath its surface, a polychrome froth and scum collected. A few hundred yards higher, having passed the place of entrance of the purple dye, the stream regained nearly its original dirty indigo appearance. Near the Low Hill bridge was a fall of hot mauve refuse, with several yards of rainbow-coloured scum. Where the water could be seen, in one light it would have a bluish tint, in another a dirty yellowish ; and the mud was deep and flocculent. Nearer Chald Lane there was an extremely filthy ditch, covered with scum, and loaded with the privy and house refuse of a large number of cottages and low lodging-houses ; and a little higher two large streams of thick purple dye refuse. Above the dam in this situation enter the waste of a dye-works and shoddy mill, with the filthy privy and surface drains of Salt Pie Alley. The water here is the colour of the contents of a slop-pail, is almost stagnant, coated in patches of several yards with scum, and is in other respects very offensive. At Brooksbank a kind of long oblong pond is formed, two sides of which are of thick mud, one exposing the privy refuse and excrements in three drains from the neighbouring cottages and lodging-houses ; and about here does or did recently enter the flushings of the cesspools from the prison with its sixteen hundred inmates, and the refuse of the chemicals used in the annual manufacture, dyeing, and bleaching of about seven hundred and fifty tons of matting. Balne Beck also enters at this point. Going upwards we find the Westgate Beck receiving the fouled water and other refuse of two large worsted mills, of surface drains, of piggeries, and of privies ; then muddy water, apparently from

some brick-yards, and hot waste from a large woollen mill. Immediately above healthy green conservæ begin to show themselves ; long grass floats on the surface ; shrubs grow upon the banks ; and if a brown scum collects where the branches touch the surface, it has altogether a less disgusting character. Fairly out in the country the water is bright and clear, and boys bathe in it in summer when deep enough.

Balne Beck is on the whole as yet tolerably clean, the sides only being lined with mud patched with red, and the stones at the bottom coated with long trails of green conservæ. The principal impurities are from a soap-works, a coal-mine, a skin-preparing shed, and a brick-field. The Yorkshire Fibre Company did a short time since drain a large quantity of poisonous matter into the beck, but is at present restrained by an injunction.

The Water Company's works are situated about two and a half miles below Wakefield Bridge, and consequently receive the water in an extremely unfavourable condition. It has received the unchecked and accumulating filth and pollution of 400,000 inhabitants (number now much greater), and their manufactures, to which Wakefield itself, with its 20,000 inhabitants, has contributed. The large live-stock market also, with its average sale of 800 beasts and 6,000 sheep, has added a grave pollution. As if to show how completely we acquiesce in the abandoned corruption of the stream, the putrefying carcasses of animals—not only of dogs and cats, but of pigs, sheep, and calves—are allowed to drift along with their surfeiting smell, until stopped of themselves at Stanley Ferry.

On stirring up the mud from the bottom, a Winchester quart of gas was readily collected by means of an inverted funnel, and was found, on examination, to consist chiefly of carbonic acid, light carburetted hydrogen, sulphuretted hydrogen, and free nitrogen.

It is not easy to estimate accurately the effect of nuisances of this kind on the public health. Two years and a half ago, whilst the waterworks were undergoing improvement, and for some months the supply to the town was merely pumped up from the river into the mains without filtration, the actual mortality did not appear directly to increase. This, however, may be explained by the fact that a peculiar atmospheric condition is necessary in order to develop fully the death-bearing properties of impure water ; and it may be added that, as it was, and as I had occasion to represent to the Local Board at that time, there was a greater amount of diarrhoea, continued fever, erysipelas, diffuse abscess, and of cutaneous and subcutaneous cellular inflammation ; while the inflammation generally was peculiarly liable to take on the erysipelatous form and become unmanageable, and the convalescence from various diseases to be

unwontedly interrupted and prolonged. Possibly this, and even an increased death-rate, had it occurred, might have been explained in part by other causes; but I cannot resist the conviction that bad water as a beverage, and the taint which it communicates to the atmosphere, bear a most important part both in causing actual disease and in weakening the power of the constitution to bear up against disease, and so shorten life in that way. Greatly improved houses have been built for the artizan class during the last few years; greater attention has been paid to the ventilation of mills and workshops; the agitation for a people's park, indicates how wide-awake the population is to the benefit of fresh air; wages have increased; the character of the food consumed is more closely inspected; the drainage is more efficient; many open sewers have been closed; bad wells have been stopped; but both the death-rate and the amount of disease have increased; the former reaching so high as 27·4 per thousand in the present year. The whole of the excess in this mortality is due to preventable disease, which includes diarrhoea, cholera, and typhoid, the poison of which may unquestionably and has frequently been known to be conveyed through water. An indication of the extent to which constitutional vigour has at the same time diminished, is found in the fact that less than twenty years ago to blister, bleed, and purge was the routine of the physicians' practice at the dispensary, while cod-liver oil and quinine were unknown. This mode of treatment, if it did not cure, certainly did not kill; for the patients did well under it, having strength to bear up against and conquer both disease and treatment. Now, I will venture to say, that ninety-nine per cent. of our patients would sink under the depletory measures of bygone days; and during last year, in a practice of only 2,700 patients, it was found necessary to prescribe no less than twenty-three gallons of cod-liver oil, and sixty-four ounces of quinine, to say nothing of nourishment and stimulants. An atmosphere saturated with smoke, and shutting out instead of conveying the light of the sun, sedentary habits, dense population, and unhealthy pursuits, have doubtless shared in bringing about this general lowness of constitution; but the healthy textural drainage and repair of the body, and consequently the perfect activity of its functions, can scarcely take place if, instead of pure water, it be supplied with a compound with which it is not organised to operate.

I have nothing to add respecting the moral contamination of material filthiness, since that is out of my province. But surely drunkenness and vice, and other forms of intellectual insensibility, are fostered, if not originated, by mental despair and disappointment; the things which should, in the ordinary course of nature, be pleasing and refreshing to the mind, having ceased to be so. At least we are taught that in the heavenly Jerusalem the river which proceeds from the

some brick-yards, and hot waste from a large woollen mill. Immediately above healthy green conseruae begin to show themselves; long grass floats on the surface; shrubs grow upon the banks; and if a brown scum collects where the branches touch the surface, it has altogether a less disgusting character. Fairly out in the country the water is bright and clear, and boys bathe in it in summer when deep enough.

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The business of mining is put in this subordinate class, because there is already more metal of all sorts than we want in the world, if it be used prudently; and the effect of this surplus is even now to make mining, on the whole, always a loss. I did not know that this law extended even to recent gold-workings. The following extract from the 'Athenæum' of April 3 of this year is, I suppose, trustworthy:—

*A History of the Precious Metals from the Earliest Times to the Present.*

By Alexander Del Mar, M.E. (Bell and Sons.)

It is not often that a volume which deals with such a subject as that which Mr. Del Mar has written on can be considered interesting by the general reader. Yet in the present instance this really might be the case if the reader were to occupy himself with those chapters in this work which deal with mining for the precious metals in America. A residence of some years in California has given Mr. Del Mar a practical acquaintance with the manner in which mining is conducted, and the history of that industry there from the commencement. This knowledge also has enabled him to describe with the vividness derived from actual knowledge the operations of the Spaniards in Central America while searching for gold from the fifteenth century onwards. The picture Mr. Del Mar draws of the results of the *auri sacra fames* which consumed both earlier and later seekers after wealth is indeed terrible. Empires were overthrown, and their industrious and docile populations were swept away in numbers almost beyond belief, or ground down by every suffering which avarice, cruelty, and sensuality could inflict. The ultimate utter exhaustion both of conquerors and conquered marks the period, reaching far into the eighteenth century, when forced labour was employed. The state-

ment that "the Indies had become 'a sort of money'" (p. 63), expresses perhaps as forcibly as possible what the fate of the native inhabitants of Southern America was under the rule of the Spaniard. And if, during the comparatively short period that has elapsed since the famous discovery of gold at Mill Race in California, the reckless consumption of life has not been associated with the utter brutality which marked the conduct of the followers of Cortes and Pizarro, the economic results are scarcely more satisfactory. Mr. Del Mar calculates that the outlay on mining far outweighs the proceeds; he estimates that the £90,000,000 of gold produced in California from 1848 to 1856 inclusive "cost in labour alone some £450,000,000, or five times its mint value" (p. 263). Nor is this estimate of the nett product even of the "Comstock Lode" more favourable to the owners (p. 266). Here also the total cost is placed at five times the return. Beyond this the mining country is devastated. Destruction of timber, consequent injury to climate, ruin to fertile land by hydraulic mining, are but a part of the injury. The scale on which operations are carried on may be judged from the fact that the aggregate length of the "mining ditches," or aqueducts, employed in bringing water to the mines, is put down as 6,585 miles in California in 1879 (p. 290). These works are maintained at much cost. The reader will ask, 'How can such an industry continue? The country is desolated, the majority of those employed lose. Why is all this labour thus misapplied?' The answer is, The spirit of gambling and the chance of a lucky hit lure the venturers on. The multitude forget the misfortunes of the many, while they hope to be numbered among the fortunate few.

# FORS CLAVIGERA.

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## LETTERS

*TO THE WORKMEN AND LABOURERS  
OF GREAT BRITAIN.*

By JOHN RUSKIN, LL.D.

*NEW SERIES.*

LETTER THE SIXTH.

LOST JEWELS.

MAY, 1883.



GEORGE ALLEN,  
SUNNYSIDE, ORPINGTON, KENT.

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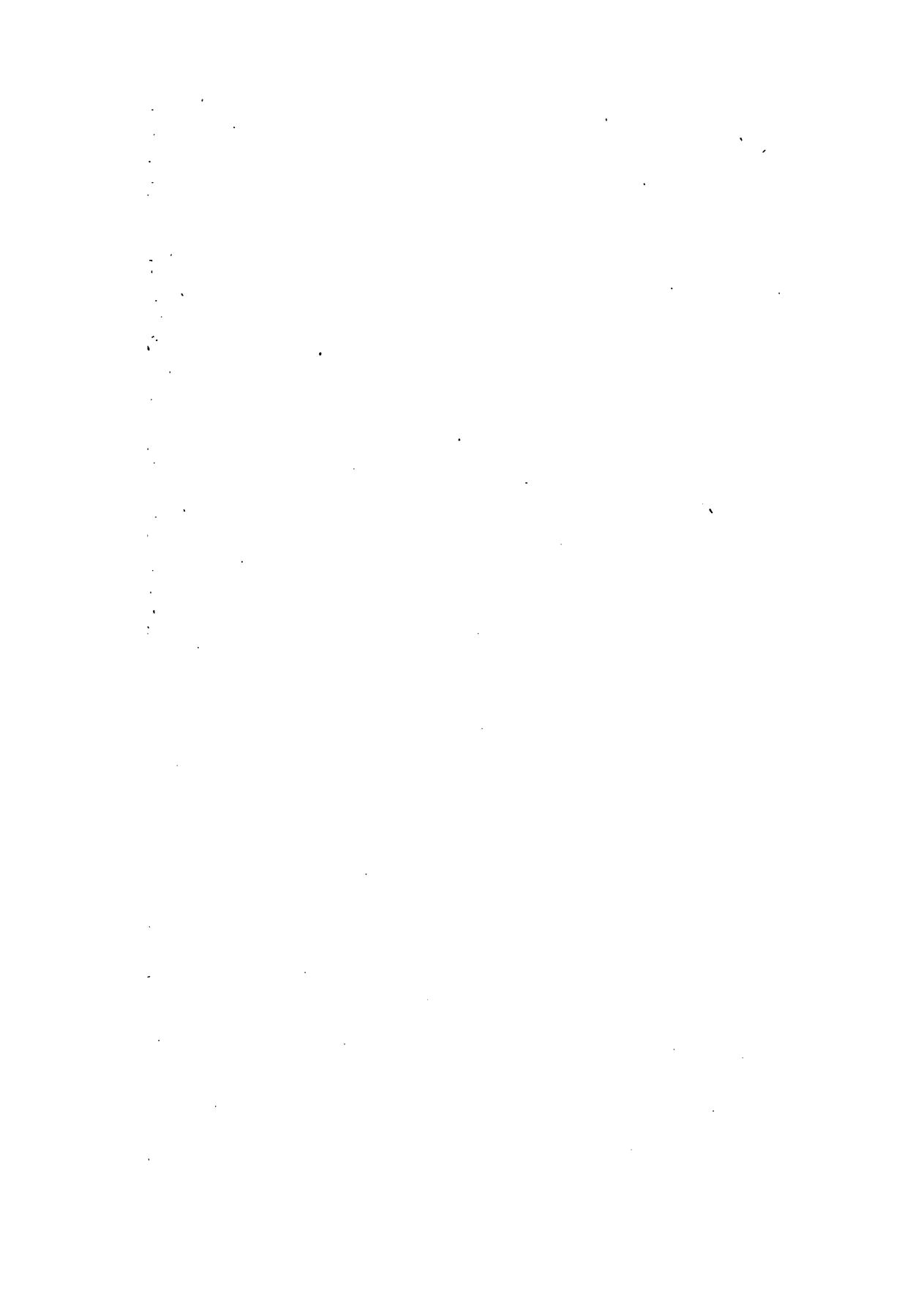
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## FORS CLAVIGERA.

*SECOND SERIES.*

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"YEA, THE WORK OF OUR HANDS, ESTABLISH THOU IT."

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I AM putting my house in order; and would fain put my past work in order too, if I could. Some guidance, at least, may be given to the readers of Fors—or to its partial readers—in their choice of this or that number. To this end I have now given each monthly part its own name, indicative of its special subject. The connection of all these subjects, and of the book itself with my other books, may perhaps begin to show itself in this letter.

The first principle of my political economy will be found again and again reiterated in all the said books,—that the material wealth of any country is the portion of its possessions which feeds and educates good men and women in it; the connected principle of national policy being that the strength and power of a country depends absolutely on the quantity of good men and women in the territory of it, and not at all on the extent of the territory—still less on the number of vile

or stupid inhabitants. A good crew in a good ship, however small, is a power; but a bad crew in the biggest ship—none,—and the best crew in a ship cut in half by a collision in a hurry, not much the better for their numbers.

Following out these two principles, I have farther, and always, taught that, briefly, the wealth of a country *is in* its good men and women, and in nothing else: that the riches of England are good Englishmen; of Scotland, good Scotchmen; of Ireland, good Irishmen. This is first, and more or less eloquently, stated in the close of the chapter called the Veins of Wealth, of ‘Unto this Last’; and is scientifically, and in sifted terms, explained and enforced in ‘Munera Pulveris.’ I have a word or two yet to add to what I have written, which I will try to keep very plain and unfigurative.

It is taught, with all the faculty I am possessed of, in ‘Sesame and Lilies,’ that in a state of society in which men and women are as good as they can be, (under mortal limitation,) the women will be the guiding and purifying power. In savage and embryo countries, they are openly oppressed, as animals of burden; in corrupted and fallen countries, more secretly and terribly. I am not careful concerning the oppression which they are able to announce themselves, forming anti-feminine-slavery colleges and institutes, etc.; but of the oppression which they cannot resist, ending in their destruction, I am careful exceedingly.

The merely calculable phenomena of economy are indeed supposed at present to indicate a glut of them ; but our economists do not appear ever to ask themselves of what *quality* the glut is, or, at all events, in what quality it would be wisest to restrict the supply, and in what quality, educated according to the laws of God, the supply *is* at present restricted.

I think the experience of most thoughtful persons will confirm me in saying that extremely good girls, (good children, broadly, but especially girls,) usually die young. The pathos of their deaths is constantly used in poetry and novels ; but the power of the fiction rests, I suppose, on the fact that most persons of affectionate temper have lost their own May Queens or little Nells in their time. For my own part of grief, I have known a little Nell die, and a May Queen die, and a queen of May, and of December also, die ;—all of them, in economists' language, 'as good as gold,' and in Christian language, 'only a little lower than the angels, and crowned with glory and honour.' And I could count the like among my best-loved friends, with a rosary of tears.

It seems, therefore, that God takes care, under present circumstances, to prevent, or at least to check, the glut of that kind of girls. *Seems*, I say, and say with caution—for perhaps it is not entirely in His good pleasure that these things are so. But, they being so, the question becomes therefore yet more imperative—

how far a country paying this enforced tax of its good girls annually to heaven is wise in taking little account of the number it has left? For observe that, just beneath these girls of heaven's own, come another kind, who are just earthly enough to be allowed to stay with us; but who get put out of the way into convents, or made mere sick-nurses of, or take to mending the irremediable,—(I've never got over the loss to me, for St. George's work, of one of the sort). Still, the nuns are always happy themselves; and the nurses do a quantity of good that may be thought of as infinite in its own way; and there's a chance of their being forced to marry a King of the Lombards and becoming Queen Theodolindas and the like: pass these, and we come to a kind of girl, just as good, but with less strong will\*—who is more or less spoilable and mis-manageable; and these are almost sure to come to grief, by the faults of others, or merely by the general fashions and chances of the world. In romance, for instance, Juliet—Lucy Ashton—Amy Robsart. In my own experience, I knew one of these killed merely by a little piece of foolish pride—the exactly opposite fault to Juliet's.† She was the niece of a most trusted friend of my father's, also a much trusted friend of

\* Or, it may be, stronger animal passion,—a greater inferiority.

† Juliet, being a girl of a noble Veronese house, had no business to fall in love at first sight with anybody. It is her humility that is the death of her; and Imogen would have died in the same way, but for her helpful brothers. Of Desdemona, see 'Fors' for November 1877 (vol. vii., p. 357).

mine in the earliest Herne Hill days of my Cock Robin-hood ; when I used to transmute his name, Mr. Dowie, into 'Mr. Good-do,' not being otherwise clear about its pronunciation. His niece was an old sea-captain's only daughter, motherless, and may have been about twenty years old when I was twelve. She was certainly the most beautiful girl of the pure English-Greek\* type I ever saw, or ever am likely to see of any type whatever. I've only since seen one who could match her, but she was Norman-English. My mother was her only confidante in her love affairs : consisting mostly in gentle refusals—not because she despised people, or was difficult to please, but wanted simply to stay with her father ; and did so serenely, modestly, and with avoidance of all pain she could spare her lovers, dismissing quickly and firmly, never tempting or playing with them.

At last, when she was some five or six and twenty, came one whom she had no mind to dismiss ; and suddenly finding herself caught, she drew up like a hart at bay. The youth, unluckily for him, dared not push his advantage, lest he should be sent away like the rest ; and would not speak,—partly, could not, loving her better than the rest, and struck dumb, as an

\* By the English-Greek type, I mean the features of the statue of Psyche at Naples, with finely-pencilled dark brows, rather dark hair, and bright pure colour. I never forget beautiful faces, nor confuse their orders of dignity, so that I am quite sure of the statement in the text.

honest and modest English lover is apt to be, when he was near her; so that she fancied he did not care for her. At last, she came to my mother to ask what she should do. My mother said, "Go away for a while,—if he cares for you, he will follow you; if not, there's no harm done."

But she dared not put it to the touch, thus, but lingered on, where she could sometimes see him,—and yet, in her girl's pride, lest he should find out she liked him, treated him worse than she had anybody ever before. Of course this piece of wisdom soon brought matters to an end. The youth gave up all hope, went away, and, in a month or two after, died of the then current plague, cholera: upon which his sister—I do not know whether in wrath or folly—told his mistress the whole matter, and showed her what she had done. The poor girl went on quietly taking care of her father, till his death, which soon followed; then, with some kindly woman-companion, went to travel.

Some five or six years afterwards, my father and mother and I were going up to Chamouni, by the old char-road under the Cascade de Chêde. There used to be an idiot beggar-girl, who always walked up beside the chars, not ugly or cretinous, but inarticulate and wild-eyed, moaning a little at intervals. She came to be, in time, year after year, a part of the scene, which one would even have been sorry to have lost. As we

drew near the top of the long hill, and this girl had just ceased following, a lady got out of a char at some little distance behind, and ran up to ours, holding out her hands.

We none of us knew her. There was something in the eyes like the wild look of the other's ; the face was wrinkled, and a little hard in expression—Alpine, now, in its beauty. “Don't you know Sybilla ?” said she. My mother made her as happy as she could for a week at Chamouni,—I am not sure if they ever met again : the girl wandered about wistfully a year or two longer, then died of rapid decline.

I have told this story in order to draw two pieces of general moral from it, which may perhaps be more useful than if they were gathered from fable.

First, a girl's proper confidant is her father. If there is any break whatever in her trust in him, from her infancy to her marriage, there is wrong somewhere,—often on his part, but most likely it is on hers ; by getting into the habit of talking with her girl-friends about what they have no business with, and her father much. What she is not inclined to tell her father, should be told to no one ; and, in nine cases out of ten, not thought of by herself.

And I believe that few fathers, however wrong-headed or hard-hearted, would fail of answering the habitual and patient confidence of their child with true care for her. On the other hand, no father *deserves*, nor

can he entirely and beautifully win, his daughter's confidence, unless he loves her better than he does himself, which is not always the case. But again here, the fault may not be all on papa's side.

In the instance before us, the relations between the motherless daughter and her old sea-captain father were entirely beautiful, but not rational enough. *He* ought to have known, and taught his pretty Sybilla, that she had other duties in the world than those immediately near his own arm-chair; and she, if resolved not to marry while he needed her, should have taken more care of her own heart, and followed my mother's wise counsel at once.

In the second place, when a youth is fully in love with a girl, and feels that he is wise in loving her, he should at once tell her so plainly, and take his chance bravely, with other suitors. No lover should have the insolence to think of being accepted at once, nor should any girl have the cruelty to refuse at once; without severe reasons. If she simply doesn't like him, she may send him away for seven years or so—he vowing to live on cresses, and wear sackcloth meanwhile, or the like penance: if she likes him a little, or thinks she might come to like him in time, she may let him stay near her, putting him always on sharp trial to see what stuff he is made of, and requiring, figuratively, as many lion-skins or giants' heads as she thinks herself worth. The whole meaning and power of true courtship

is Probation; and it oughtn't to be shorter than three years at least,—seven is, to my own mind, the orthodox time. And these relations between the young people should be openly and simply known, not to their friends only, but to everybody who has the least interest in them: and a girl worth anything ought to have always half a dozen or so of suitors under vow for her.

There are no words strong enough to express the general danger and degradation of the manners of mob-courtship, as distinct from these, which have become the fashion,—almost the law,—in modern times: when in a miserable confusion of candlelight, moonlight, and limelight—and anything but daylight,—in indecently attractive and insanely expensive dresses, in snatched moments, in hidden corners, in accidental impulses and dismal ignorances, young people smirk and ogle and whisper and whimper and sneak and stumble and flutter and fumble and blunder into what they call Love;—expect to get whatever they like the moment they fancy it, and are continually in the danger of losing all the honour of life for a folly, and all the joy of it by an accident.

Passing down now from the class of good girls who have the power, if they had the wisdom, to regulate their lives instead of losing them, to the less fortunate classes, equally good—(often, weighing their adversity in true balance, it might be conjectured, better,)—who

have little power of ruling, and every provocation to misruling their fates: who have, from their births, much against them, few to help, and, virtually, none to guide,—how are we to count the annual loss of its girl-wealth to the British nation in these? Loss, and probably worse; for if there be fire and genius in these neglected ones, and they chance to have beauty also, they are apt to become to us long-running, heavy burdening, incalculable compound interest of perdition. God save them, and all of us, at last!

But, merely taking the pocket-book red-lined balance of the matter, what, in mere cash and curricle, do these bright reverses of their best human treasures cost the economical British race, or the cheerful French? That account you would do well to cast, looking down from its Highgate upon your own mother—(of especially these sort of children?) city; or, in Paris, from the hill named, from the crowd of its Christian martyrs, Mont Martre, upon the island in Seine named 'of our Lady'—the Ile Notre Dame; or, from top of Ingleborough, on all the south and east of Lancashire and Yorkshire, black with the fume of their fever-fretted cities, rolling itself along the dales, mixed with the torrent mists. Do this piece of statistic and arithmetic *there*, taking due note that each of these great and little Babylons, if even on the creditor side you may set it down for so much (dubitable) value of produce in dynamite and bayonet, in vitriol,

brass, and iron,—yet on the debtor side has to account for annual deficit indubitable!—the casting away of things precious, the profanation of things pure, the pain of things capable of happiness—to what sum?

I have told you a true story of the sorrow and death of a maid whom all who knew her delighted in. I want you to read another of the sorrow and vanishing of one whom few, except her father, delighted in; and none, in any real sense, cared for. A younger girl this, of high powers—and higher worth, as it seems to me. The story is told in absolute and simple truth by Miss Laffan, in her little grey and red book, —‘Baubie Clarke.’ (Blackwood and Sons, Edinburgh, 1880.) “It all happened in Edinburgh,” Miss Laffan says in a private letter to me, “exactly as I relate: I went into every place in which this child was, in order to describe them and her, and I took great pains to give the dialect exactly. I remember how disappointed you were to learn that Flitters’ death was not true;—this story is quite true, from first to last.” I must leave my darling Baubie for a moment, to explain the above sentence with a word or two about my still better beloved Flitters, in ‘Tatters, Flitters, and the Councillor.’ The study of those three children, given by Miss Laffan, is, in the deepest sense, more true, as well as more pathetic, than that of Baubie Clarke,—for Miss Laffan knows and sees the children

of her own country thoroughly,\* but she has no clear perceptions of the Scotch. Also, the main facts concerning Tatters and Flitters and their legal adviser are all true—bitterly and brightly true: but the beautiful and heroic death was—I could find it in my heart to say, unhappily,—*not* the young girl's. Flitters, when last I heard of her, was still living her life of song; such song as was possible to her. The death, so faithfully and beautifully told, was actually that of an old man, an outcast, like herself. I have no doubt Flitters could, and would, have died so, had it become her duty, and the entire harmony of the story is perfect; but it is not so sound, for my purpose here, as the pure and straightforward truth of Baubie Clarke.

I must give the rude abstract of it at once: Miss Laffan's detailed picture will not, I believe, be afterwards of less interest.

Baubie, just thirteen, lived with her father and mother, in lodgings, such as the piety of Edinburgh provides for her poor. The mother was a hopeless drunkard, her father the same—on Saturday nights; during the week carrying advertisement-boards for what stipend that kind of service obtains. Baubie, a

\* It is curious, by the way, how totally Miss Edgeworth failed in drawing Irish *children*, though she could do English ones perfectly—and how far finer 'Simple Susan' is than 'The Orphans'—while her Irish men and women are perfect, and she is, in fact, the only classical authority in the matter of Irish character.

vagrant street-singer, is the chief support and guardian both of father and mother. She is taken captive one day, at a street corner, by a passing benevolent lady; (I can't find out, and Miss Laffan is to be reprimanded for this omission, if Baubie was pretty!—in her wild way, I gather—yes;) carried off to an institution of sempstresses, where she is cross-examined, with wonder, and some pity; but found to be an independent British subject, whose liberties, at that moment, cannot be infringed. But a day or two afterwards, her father coming to grief, somehow, and getting sent to prison for two months, the magistrate very properly takes upon him the responsibility of committing Baubie, in the meantime, to Miss Mackenzie's care. (I forget what becomes of the mother.)

She is taken into a charitable, religious, and extremely well-regulated institution; she is washed and combed properly, and bears the operation like a courageous poodle; obeys afterwards what orders are given her, patiently and duly. To her much surprise and discontent, her singing, the chief pleasure and faculty of her existence, is at once stopped, under penalties. And, while she stays in the institution, she makes no farther attempt to sing.

But, from the instant she heard her father's sentence in the police court, she has counted days and hours. A perfect little keeper of accounts she is: the Judgment Angel himself, we may not doubt, approving and

assisting, so far as needful. She knows the day and the hour by the Tron church, at which her father, thinking himself daughterless, will be thrust out, wistful, from his prison gate. She is only fearful, prudently and beautifully self-distrusting, of missing count of a day.

In the dormitory of her institution, on an unregarded shutter, in the shade, morning after morning she cuts her punctual notch.

And the weary sixty days pass by. The notches are counted true to the last,—and on the last night, her measures all taken, and her points and methods of attack all planned, she opens the window-sash silently, leaps down into the flowerless garden, climbs its wall, cat-like,—Lioness-like,—and flies into Edinburgh before the morning light. And at noon, her father, faltering through the prison gate, finds her sitting on its step, waiting for him.

And they two leave Edinburgh together, and are seen—never more.

On the cover of the book which tells you this ower-true Scots novel, there is a rude woodcut of Baubie, with a background consisting of a bit of a theatre, an entire policeman, and the advertisement window of a tavern,—with tacit implication that, according to the benevolent people of Edinburgh, all the mischief they contend with is in theatres, as against chapels; taverns, as against coffee-shops; and police, as against universal Scripture-readers.

Partly, this is true,—in the much greater part it is untrue;—and all through ‘Fors’ you will find the contrary statement that theatres should be pious places; taverns, holy places, and policemen an irresistibly benevolent power: which, indeed, they mostly *are* already; and what London crossings and cart-drivings would be without them we all know. But I can write no more on these matters myself, in this Fors, and must be content to quote the following extremely beautiful and practical suggestion by Sir John Ellesmere, and so, for to day, end.

“ I don’t care much about music myself. Indeed, I often wonder at the sort of passionate delight which Milverton, and people like him, have in the tinkling of cymbals; but I suppose that their professions of delight are sincere. I proposed to a grave statesman, who looked daggers at me for the proposal, that the surplus of the Irish Church revenues should be devoted to giving opera-boxes to poor people who are very fond of music. What are you all giggling at? I’ll bet any money that that surplus will not be half so well employed. Dear old Peabody used to send orders for opera-boxes to poor friends. I was once present when one of these orders arrived for a poor family devoted to music; and I declare I have seldom seen such joy manifested by any human beings. I don’t mind telling you that since that time, I have sometimes done

something of the same kind myself. Very wrong, of course, for I ought to have given the money to a hospital."

In looking back over Fors with a view to indices, I find the Notes and Correspondence in small print a great plague, and purpose henceforward to print all letters that are worth my reader's diligence in the same-sized type as my own talk. His attention is first requested to the following very valuable one, originally addressed to the editor of the 'Dunfermline Journal'; whence reprinted, it was forwarded to me, and is here gladly edited again; being the shortest and sensiblest I ever got yet on the vegetarian side.

VEGETARIANISM.—"Sir,—As a vegetarian, and mother of four vegetarian children, will you kindly grant me a little space in favour of a cause which editors seemingly regard as a subject for jest rather than serious consideration? Without aiming at convincing men, I would appeal principally to women and mothers; to consider this cause, if they wish to enjoy good rest at nights and see robust healthy children who are never fevered with fatty soups. Without taking up the question about the use or abuse of the lower animals, I would direct your attention to our own species—men and women—and the benefit of vegetarianism as regards them only, economy being one of my pleas; health, comfort, and

cleanliness the others. Look on the lower masses who live in fever dens, dress in rags, are constant claimants of charity, invariable exhibitions of dirt and disease; and go when you like to their dens, what fries of steaks and pork do you not sniff up, with the other compounds of abominations! Look at the other picture. Scotsmen are all the world over foremen in workshops and leaders of men. Who are the best men in Scotland but these porridge-fed, abstemious, clear-headed Aberdonians, who only grow weakly and unhealthy when they grow out of the diet that made their positions, and take to the customs about them? Is the man or woman to be laughed at, or admired, the most who can be content with a bit of bread or a basin of porridge as a meal, that he may be able to buy clothes or books, or take a better house to live in, or have something to lay past for education, or to give in charity after he has paid his debts; or is the custom to be advocated that encourages gorging three or four times a-day with all sorts of expensive luxuries, meaning, to the workman, when his work is slack, starvation or dependence? Sir, to me—a vegetarian both from choice and necessity—it appears that no condition of life can justify that practice while poverty exists. As regards the laws of health I leave the matter to doctors to take up and discuss. I have only to say from the personal experience of five years that I am healthier and stronger than I was before, have healthy, strong

children, who never require a doctor, and who live on oatmeal porridge and pease bannocks, but who do not know the taste of beef, butter, or tea, and who have never lost me a night's rest from their birth. Porridge is our principal food, but a drink of buttermilk or an orange often serve our dinner, and through the time saved I have been able to attend to the health of my children and the duties of my home without the hindrance of a domestic servant, my experiments in that line being a complete failure.

"I am, etc., HELEN NISBET.

"35, Lorne Street, Leith Walk."

I am in correspondence with the authoress of this letter, and will give the results arrived at in next *Fors*, only saying now that Walter Scott, Burns, and Carlyle, are, among the immortals, on her side, with a few other wise men, such as Orpheus, St. Benedict, and St. Bernard; and that, although under the no less wise guidance of the living Esculapius, Sir William Gull, (himself dependent much for diet on Abigail's gift to David, a bunch of raisins,) I was cured of my last dangerous illness with medicine of mutton-chop, and oysters; it is conceivable that these drugs were in reality homœopathic, and hairs of the dogs that bit me. I am content to-day to close the evidence for the vegetarians with Orpheus' Hymn to the Earth:—

"Oh Goddess Earth, mother of the happy Gods and  
of mortal men,

All-nursing, all-giving, all-bearing, all-destroying ;  
Increasing in blossom, heavy with fruit, overflowing  
with beauty,  
Throne of eternal ordinance, infinitely adorned girl,  
Who bearest in birth-pang all manner of fruit ;  
Eternal, all-honoured, deep-hearted, happy-fated ;  
Rejoicing in meadow-sweetness, deity of flower-  
multitude,  
And joyful in thy Night ; round whom the fair-wrought  
order of the stars  
Rolls in its everlasting nature and dreadful flowing ;  
Oh blessed goddess, increase thy fruits in gladness,  
And through thy happy seasons in kindness of soul."

The second, and in this number terminal letter, which I have to recommend to the reader's study, is one from the agents to the Dean and Chapter of Chester, as follows :—

"St. Werburgh Chambers, Chester, April 17, 1883.

"Sir,—Our attention has just been called to an anonymous letter contained in your 'Fors'—letter fifth, 1880—reflecting on the Dean and Chapter of Chester in the management of their property. The paragraph occurs at p. 145-46, and commences thus : 'Only a week ago,' etc. ; and ends, 'With an irresistible tongue,' etc.

"Our answer is :—The Dean and Chapter have never refused to grant a lease to an eligible man, but have always complied when asked. They have *not* 'raised

all the rents,' etc., but have materially reduced most of them since they acquired their property. The agents never interfere with the modes of farming unless manifestly exhaustive; and the statement that they 'only allow the land to be sown,' etc., on a 'personal inspection of their agents,' is untrue. They never heard of any 'poverty prevailing (*sic*) on their estate to an alarming extent,' or to any extent at all. Surely 'the Workmen and Labourers of Great Britain' deserve to be approached with verified facts, and not thus.

"Yours obediently, TOWNSHEND AND BARKUS.

(Agents to the Dean and Chapter of Chester.)

"Jno. Ruskin, Esq., LL.D."

The only notice which it seems to me necessary to take of this letter is the expression of my satisfaction in receiving it, qualified with the recommendation to the Very Rev<sup>d</sup>. the Dean and Rev<sup>ds</sup>. the Chapter of Chester, to advise their agents that 'prevailing' is usually spelt with an 'i.'

JOHN RUSKIN.

BRANTWOOD, 23rd April, 1883.

# FORS CLAVIGERA.

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## LETTERS

*TO THE WORKMEN AND LABOURERS  
OF GREAT BRITAIN.*

BY JOHN RUSKIN, LL.D.

LETTER THE 91st.

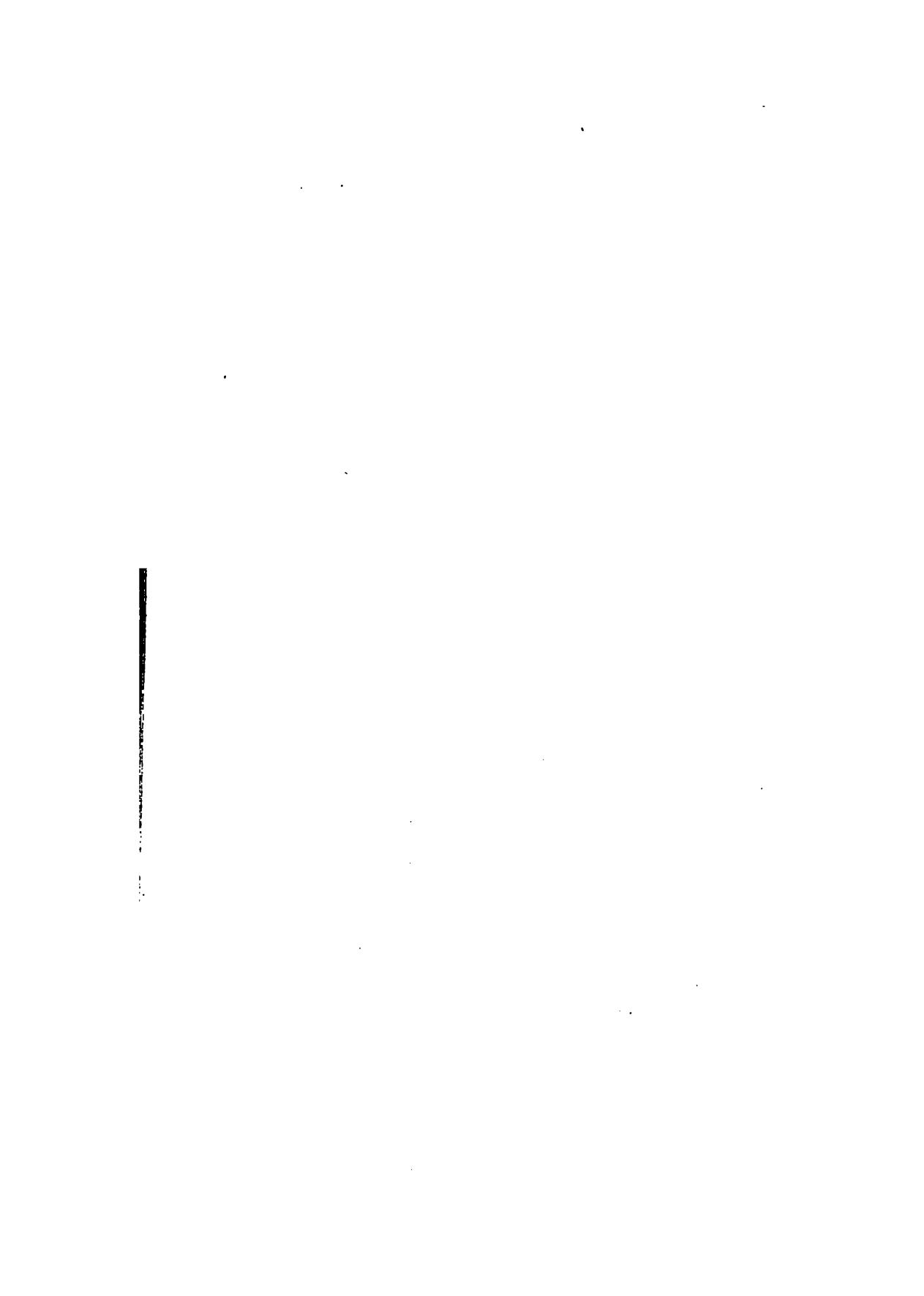
(SEVENTH OF NEW SERIES).

SEPTEMBER, 1883.

DUST OF GOLD.



GEORGE ALLEN,  
SUNNYSIDE, ORPINGTON, KENT.





## LETTER THE 91st.

SEPTEMBER, 1883.

DUST OF GOLD.

I HAVE received several letters from young correspondents, complaining that I attach too much importance to beauty in women, and asking, "What are plain girls to do?"—one of them putting this farther question, not easy of answer, "Why beauty is so often given to girls who have only the mind to misuse it, and not to others, who would hold it as a power for God's service?" To which question, however, it is to be

answered, in the first place, that the mystery is quite as great in the bestowal of riches and wit; in the second place, that the girls who misuse their beauty, only do it because they have not been taught better, and it is much more other people's fault than theirs; in the third place, that the privilege of seeing beauty is quite as rare a one as that of possessing it, and far more fatally misused.

The question, "What are plain girls to do?" requires us first to understand clearly what "plainness" is. No girl who is well bred, kind, and modest, is ever offensively plain; all real deformity means want of manners, or of heart. I may say, in defence of my own constant praise of beauty, that I do not attach half the real importance to it which is assumed in ordinary fiction;—above all, in the pages of the periodical which best represents, as a whole, the public mind of England. As a rule, throughout the whole seventy-volume series of 'Punch,'—first by Leech and then by Du Maurier,—all nice girls are represented as pretty; all nice women, as both pretty and well dressed; and if the reader will compare a sufficient number of examples extending over a series of years, he will find the moral lesson more and more enforced by this most popular authority, that all real ugliness in either sex means some kind of hardness of heart, or vulgarity of education. The ugliest man, for all in all, in 'Punch' is Sir Gorgius Midas,—the ugliest women, those who are unwilling to be old. Generally

speaking, indeed, 'Punch' is cruel to women above a certain age; but this is the expression of a real truth in modern England, that the ordinary habits of life and modes of education produce great plainness of *mind* in middle-aged women.

I recollect three examples in the course of only the last four or five months of railway travelling. The most interesting and curious one was a young woman evidently of good mercantile position, who came into the carriage with her brother out of one of the manufacturing districts. Both of them gave me the idea of being amiable in disposition, and fairly clever, perhaps a little above the average in natural talent; while the sister had good features, and was not much over thirty. But the face was fixed in an iron hardness, and keenly active incapacity of any deep feeling or subtle thought, which pained me almost as much as a physical disease would have done; and it was an extreme relief to me when she left the carriage. Another type, pure cockney, got in one day at Paddington, a girl of the lower middle class, round-headed, and with the most profound and sullen expression of discontent, complicated with ill-temper, that I ever saw on human features:—I could not at first be certain how far this expression was innate, and how far superinduced; but she presently answered the question by tearing open the paper she had bought with the edge of her hand into jags half an inch deep, all the way across.

The third, a far more common type, was of self-possessed and all-engrossing selfishness, complicated with stupidity;—a middle-aged woman with a novel, who put up her window and pulled down both blinds (side and central) the moment she got in, and read her novel till she fell asleep over it: presenting in that condition one of the most stolidly disagreeable countenances which could be shaped out of organic clay.

In both these latter cases, as in those of the girls described in *Fors II.*, p. 146, the offensiveness of feature implied, for one thing, a constant vexation, and *diffused* agony or misery, endured through every moment of conscious life, together with total dulness of sensation respecting delightful and beautiful things, summed in the passage just referred to as “*tortured* indolence, and *infidel* eyes,” and given there as an example of “life negative, under the curse,” the state of condemnation which begins in this world, and separately affects every living member of the body; the opposite state of life, under blessing, being represented by the Venice-imagined beauty of St. Ursula, in whose countenance what beauty there may be found (I have known several people who saw none, and indeed Carpaccio has gifted her with no dazzling comeliness) depends mainly on the opposite character of *diffused* joy, and ecstasy in peace.

And in places far too many to indicate, both of *Fors* and my Oxford lectures, I have spoken again and again

of this radiant expression of cheerfulness, as a primal element of Beauty, quoting Chaucer largely on the matter ; and clinching all, somewhere, (I can't look for the place now,) by saying that the wickedness of any nation might be briefly measured by observing how far it had made its girls miserable.

I meant this quality of cheerfulness to be included, above, in the word "well-bred," meaning original purity of race (Chaucer's "debonnaireté") disciplined in courtesy, and the exercises which develope animal power and spirit. I do not in the least mean to limit the word to aristocratic birth and education. Gotthelf's Swiss heroine, Freneli, to whom I have dedicated, in 'Proserpina,' the pansy of the Wengern Alp, is only a farm-servant ; and Scott's Jeanie Deans is of the same type in Scotland. And among virtuous nations, or the portions of them who remain virtuous, as the Tyrolese and Bavarian peasants, the Tuscans (of whom I am happily enabled to give soon some true biography and portraiture), and the mountain and sea-shore races of France, England, Scotland, and Ireland, almost everybody is "well-bred," and the girlish beauty universal. Here in Coniston it is almost impossible to meet a child whom it is not a real sorrow again to lose sight of. So that the second article of St. George's creed, "I believe in the nobleness of human nature," may properly be considered as involving the farther though minor belief in the loveliness of the human form ; and in my next

course of work at Oxford, I shall have occasion to insist at some length on the reality and frequency of beauty in ordinary life, as it has been shown us by the popular art of our own day. This frequency of it, however, supposing we admit the fact, in no wise diminishes the burden to be sustained by girls who are conscious of possessing less than these ordinary claims to admiration ; nor am I in the least minded to recommend the redemption of their loneliness by any more than common effort to be good or wise. On the contrary, the prettier a girl is, the more it becomes her duty to try to be good ; and little can be hoped of attempts to cultivate the understanding, which have only been provoked by a jealous vanity. The real and effective sources of consolation will be found in the quite opposite direction, of self-forgetfulness ;—in the cultivation of sympathy with others, and in turning the attention and the heart to the daily pleasures open to every young creature born into this marvellous universe. The landscape of the lover's journey may indeed be invested with æthereal colours, and his steps be measured to heavenly tunes unheard of other ears ; but there is no sense, because these selfish and temporary raptures are denied to us, in refusing to see the sunshine on the river, or hear the lark's song in the sky. To some of my young readers, the saying may seem a hard one ; but they may rest assured that the safest and purest joys of human life rebuke the violence of its passions ; that they are

obtainable without anxiety, and memorable without regret.

Having, therefore, this faith, or more justly speaking, this experience and certainty, touching the frequency of pleasing feature in well bred and modest girls, I did not use the phrase in last "Fors," which gave (as I hear) great offence to some feminine readers, "a girl *worth anything*," exclusively, or even chiefly, with respect to attractions of person; but very deeply and solemnly in the full sense of worthiness, or (regarding the range of its influence) All-worthiness, which qualifies a girl to be the ruling Sophia of an all-worthy workman, yeoman, squire, duke, king, or Caliph;—not to calculate the advance which, doubtless, the luxury of Mayfair and the learning of Girton must have made since the days when it was written of Koot el Kuloob, or Enees-el Jelees, that "the sum of ten thousand pieces of gold doth not equal the cost of the chickens which she hath eaten, and the dresses which she hath bestowed on her teachers; for she hath learned writing, and grammar, and lexicology, and the interpretation of the Koran, and the fundamentals of law, and religion, and medicine, and the computation of the Calendar, and the art of playing upon musical instruments,"\*—not calculating, I say, any of these singular powers or preciousnesses, but only thinking of the constant value generalized among the King's verses, by that notable one, "Every

\* 'Arabian Nights,' Lane's translation, i. 392.

wise woman buildeth her house ; but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands,"—and seeing that our present modes of thought and elements of education are not always so arranged as to foster to their utmost the graces of prudence and economy in woman, it was surely no over-estimate of the desirableness of any real house-builder among girls, that she should have five or six suitors at once under vow for her ? Vow, surely also of no oppressive or extravagant nature ! I said nothing of such an one as was required by Portia's father of ~~her~~ suitors, and which many a lover instinctively makes, in his own bosom,—“her, or none.” I said nothing of any oath of allegiance preventing the freedom of farther search or choice ;—but only the promise of the youth that, until he saw one better worth winning, he would faithfully obey his chosen mistress's will in all things ; and suffer such test as she chose to put him to : it being understood that at any time he had the power as openly to withdraw as he had openly accepted the candidature.

The position of Waverley towards Flora MacIvor, of Lord Evandale to Miss Bellenden, of Lovel to Miss Wardour, Tressilian to Amy Robsart, or Quentin Durward to the Countess Isabel, are all in various ways illustrative of this form of fidelity in more or less hopeless endeavour : while also the frankness of confession is assumed both by Miss Edgeworth and Richardson, as by Shakespeare, quite to the point of entire publicity in the social circle

of the lovers.\* And I am grieved to say that the casual observations which have come to my ears, since last "Fors" appeared, as to the absurdity and impossibility of such devotion, only further prove to me what I have long since perceived, that very few young people, brought up on modern principles, have ever felt love, or even know what it means, except under the conditions in which it is also possible to the lower animals. I could easily prove this, if it were apposite to my immediate purpose, and if the subject were not too painful, by the evidence given me in a single evening, during which I watched the enthusiastic acceptance by an English audience of Salvini's frightful, and radically false, interpretation of Othello.

Were I to yield, as I was wont in the first series of these letters, without scruple, to the eddies of thought which turned the main stream of my discourse into apparently irrelevant, and certainly unprogressive inlets, I should in this place proceed to show how true-love is inconsistent with railways, with joint-stock banks, with the landed interest, with parliamentary interest, with grouse shooting, with lawn tennis, with monthly magazines, spring fashions, and Christmas cards. But I am resolute now to explain myself in one place before becoming enigmatic in another, and keep to my one point

\* See the decision of Miss Broadhurst in the thirteenth chapter of the "Absentee"; and the courtships to Harriet Byron, *passim*. The relations of France to Cordelia, of Henry V. to the Princess Katharine, and of the Duke to Olivia, are enough to name among the many instances in Shakespeare.

until I have more or less collected what has been said about it in former letters. And thus continuing to insist at present only on the worth or price of womanhood itself, and of the value of feminine creatures in the economy of a state, I must ask the reader to look back to 'Fors' I. (Letter IV., p. 12), where I lament my own poverty in not being able to buy a white girl of (in jeweller's language) good lustre and facetting; as in another place I in like manner bewail the present order of society in that I cannot make a raid on my neighbour's house, and carry off three graceful captives at a time; and in one of the quite most important pieces of all the book, or of any of my books, the essential nature of real property in general is illustrated by that of the two primary articles of a man's wealth, Wife, and Home; and the meaning of the word "mine," said to be only known in its depth by any man with reference to the first. And here, for further, and in its sufficiency I hope it may be received as a final, illustration, read the last lines (for I suppose the terminal lines can only be received as epilogue) of the play by which, in all the compass of literature, the beauty of pure youth has been chiefly honoured; there are points in it deserving notice besides the one needful to my purpose:—

*Prince.* "Where be these enemies? Capulet! Montague!  
See what a scourge is laid upon your hate,

That heaven finds means to kill your joys  
with love !

And I, for winking at your discords too,  
Have lost a brace of kinsmen :—all are  
punish'd.

*Cap.* O brother Montague, give me thy hand :  
This is my daughter's jointure, for no more  
Can I demand.

*Mont.* "But I can give thee more :  
For I will raise her statue in pure gold ;  
That, while Verona by that name is known,  
There shall no figure at such rate be set,  
As that of true and faithful Juliet.

*Cap.* "As rich shall Romeo by his lady lie ;  
Poor sacrifices of our enmity."

I do not know if in the tumultuous renderings and reckless abridgments of this play on the modern stage, the audience at any theatre is ever led to think of the meaning of the Prince's saying, "That heaven finds means to *kill your joys with love*." Yet in that one line is the key of Christian theology and of wise natural philosophy ; the knowledge of the law that binds the yoke of inauspicious stars, and ordains the slumber of world-wearied flesh.

Look back to Friar Laurence's rebuke of the parent's grief at Juliet's death,—

"Heaven and yourself  
Had part in this fair maid ; now Heaven hath all" ;

and you will find, in the concluding lines, not only the interpretation of the Prince's meaning, but a clear light thrown on a question lately, in some one of our critical magazines, more pertinently asked than intelligently answered—"Why Shakespeare wrote tragedies?" One of my chief reasons for withdrawing from the later editions of "Sesame and Lilies" the closing lecture, on the "Mystery of Life," was the feeling that I had not with enough care examined the spirit of faith in God, and hope in Futurity, which, though unexpressed, were meant by the master of tragedy to be felt by the spectator, what they were to himself, the solution and consolation of all the wonderfulness of sorrow;—a faith for the most part, as I have just said, unexpressed; but here summed in a single line, which explains the instinctive fastening of the heart on the great poetic stories of grief,—

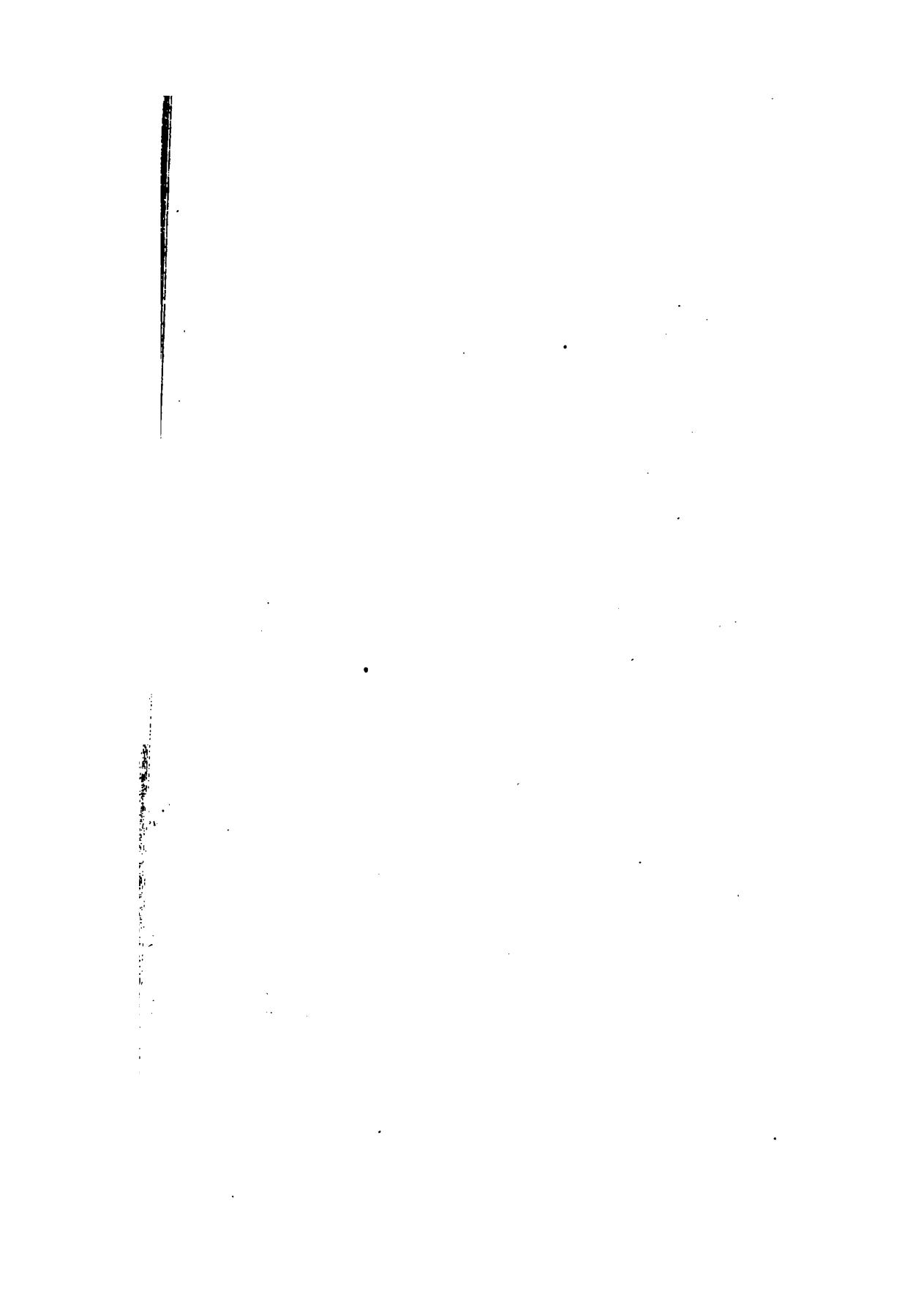
"For Nature's tears are Reason's merriment."

Returning to the terminal passage of the play, may I now ask the reader to meditate on the alchemy of fate, which changes the youth and girl into two golden statues? Admit the gain in its completeness; suppose that the gold had indeed been given down, like Danæe's from heaven, in exchange for them; imagine, if you will, the perfectest art-skill of Bezaleel or Aholiab lavished on the imperishable treasures. Verona is richer, is she, by so much bullion? Italy, by so much art? Old

Montague and Capulet have their boy's and girl's "worth" in gold, have they? And though for every boy and girl whom now you exile from the gold of English harvest and the ruby of Scottish heath, there return to you, O loving friends, their corpses' weight, and more, in Californian sand,—is your bargain with God's bounty wholly to your mind? or if so, think you that it is to His, also?

Yet I will not enter here into any debate of loss by exile, and national ostracism of our strongest. I keep to the estimate only of our loss by helpless, reckless, needless death, the enduring torture at the bolted theatre door of the world, and on the staircase it has smoothed to Avernus.

'Loss of life'! By the ship overwhelmed in the river, shattered on the sea; by the mine's blast, the earthquake's burial—you mourn for the multitude slain. You cheer the lifeboat's crew: you hear, with praise and joy, of the rescue of one still breathing body more at the pit's mouth:—and all the while, for one soul that is saved from the momentary passing away (according to your creed, to be with its God), the lost souls, yet locked in their polluted flesh, haunt, with worse than ghosts, the shadows of your churches, and the corners of your streets; and your weary children watch, with no memory of Jerusalem, and no hope of return from *their* captivity, the weltering to the sea of your Waters of Babylon.



# FORS CLAVIGERA.

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## LETTERS

*TO THE WORKMEN AND LABOURERS  
OF GREAT BRITAIN.*

BY JOHN RUSKIN, LL.D.

LETTER THE 92nd.

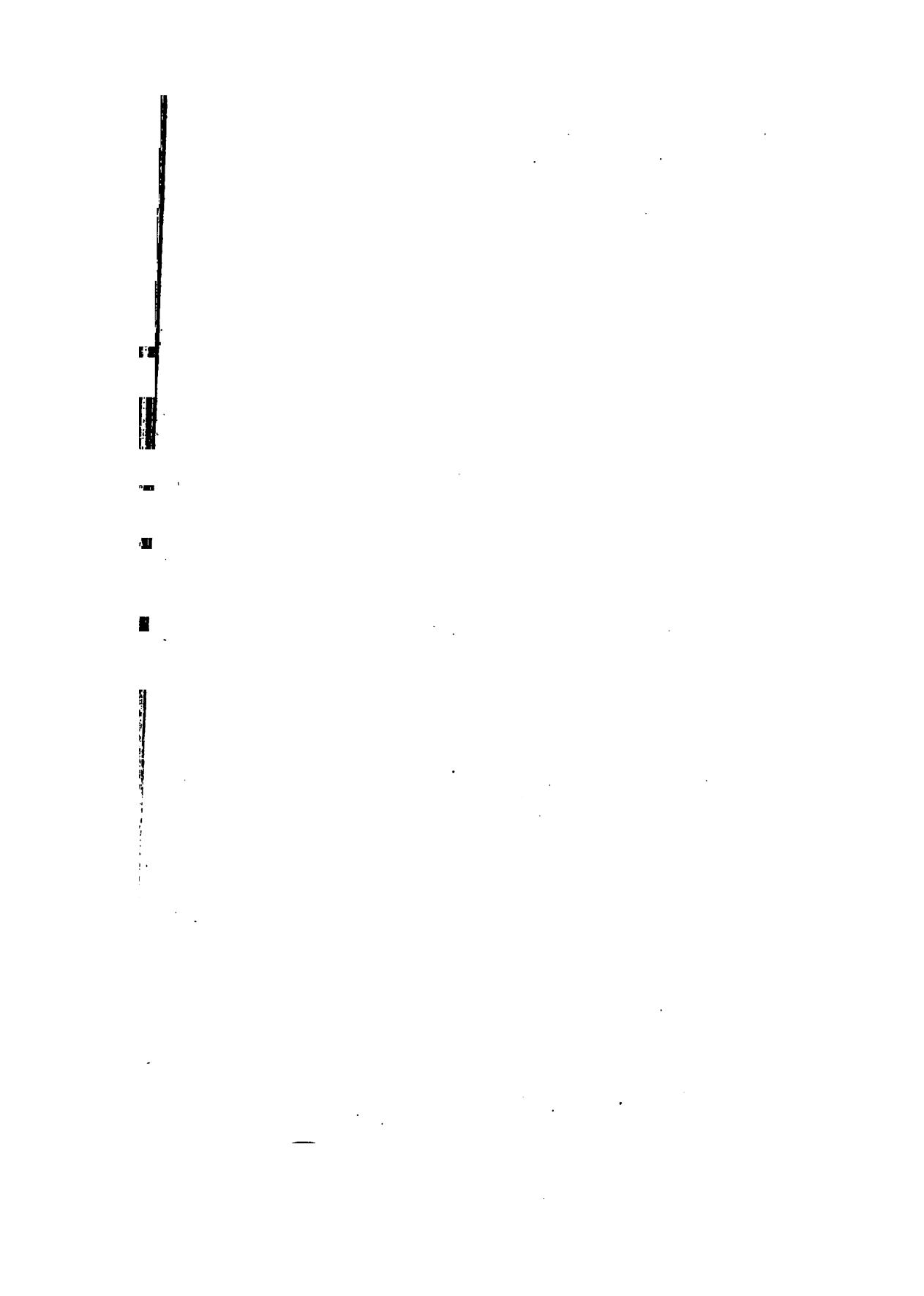
(EIGHTH OF NEW SERIES).

NOVEMBER, 1883.

ASHESTIEL.



GEORGE ALLEN,  
SUNNYSIDE, ORPINGTON, KENT.



## FORS CLAVIGERA.

### LETTER THE 92nd.

ASHESTIEL.

ABBOTSFORD, *September 26th, 1883.*

I CAN never hear the whispering and sighing of the Tweed among his pebbles, but it brings back to me the song of my nurse, as we used to cross by Coldstream Bridge, from the south, in our happy days.

"For Scotland, my darling, lies full in my view,  
With her barefooted lassies, and mountains so blue."

Those two possessions, you perceive, my poor Euryklea felt to be the chief wealth of Scotland, and meant the epithet 'barefooted' to be one of praise.

In the two days that have past since I this time crossed the Border, I have seen but one barefooted lassie, and she not willingly so,—but many high-heeled ones:—who willingly, if they might, would have been heeled yet higher. And perhaps few, even of better minded Scots maidens, remember, with any due admiration, that

the greater part of Jeanie Deans' walk to London was done barefoot, the days of such pilgrimage being now, in the hope of Scotland, for ever past ; and she, by help of the high chimneys built beside Holyrood and Melrose, will henceforward obtain the beatitude of Antichrist,—Blessed be ye Rich.

Nevertheless, it is worthy of note that in the village where Bruce's heart is buried, I could yesterday find no better map of Scotland than was purchaseable for a penny,—no clear sign, to my mind, either of the country's vaster wealth, or more refined education. Still less that the spot of earth under which the king's heart lies should be indicated to the curious observer by a small white ticket, pegged into the grass ; which might at first sight seem meant to mark the price of that piece of goods ; and indeed, if one meditates a little on the matter, verily does so ; this piece of pasteboard being nothing less than King Robert Bruce's monument and epitaph ; and the devotional offering of Scotland in the nineteenth century, at his shrine. Economical, even in pasteboard, as compared with the lavish expenditure of that material by which the 'Scots wha hae,' etc., receive on all their paths of pilgrimage the recommendation of Colman's mustard.

So much, looking out on the hillside which Scott planted in his pride, and the garden he enclosed in the joy of his heart, I perceive to be the present outcome of his work in literature. Two small white tickets—one

for the Bruce, the other for Michael Scott: manifold acreage of yellow tickets—for Colman's mustard. Thus may we measure the thirst for knowledge excited by modern Scottish religion, and satisfied by modern Scottish education.

WHITHORN, October 3rd, 1883.

As the sum of Sir Walter's work at Melrose, so here the sum of St. Ninian's at Candida Casa, may be set down in few and sorrowful words. I notice that the children of the race who now for fifteen hundred years have been taught in this place the Word of Christ, are divided broadly into two classes: one, very bright and trim, strongly and sensibly shod and dressed, satchel on shoulder, and going to or from school by railroad; walking away, after being deposited at the small stations, in a brisk and independent manner. But up and down the earthy broadway between the desolate-looking houses which form the main street of Whithorn, as also in the space of open ground which borders the great weir and rapid of the Nith at Dumfries, I saw wistfully errant groups of altogether neglected children, barefoot enough, tattered in frock, begrimed in face, their pretty long hair wildly tangled or ruggedly matted, and the total bodies and spirits of them springing there by the wayside like its thistles,—with such care as Heaven gives to the herbs of the field,—and Heaven's Adversary to the seed on the Rock.

They are many of them Irish, the Pastor of Whithorn tells me,—the parents too poor to keep a priest, one coming over from Wigton sometimes for what ministratation may be imperative. This the ending of St. Ninian's prayer and fast in his dark sandstone cave, filled with the hollow roar of Solway,—now that fifteen hundred years of Gospel times have come and gone.

This the end : but of what is it to be the beginning ? of what new Kingdom of Heaven are *these* children the nascent citizens ? To what Christ are these to be allowed to come for benediction, unforbidden ?

BRANTWOOD, October 10th, 1883.

The above two entries are all I could get written of things felt and seen during ten days in Scott's country and St. Ninian's ; somewhat more I must set down before the impression fades. Not irrelevantly, for it is my instant object in these resumed letters to index and enforce what I have said hitherto on early education ; and while, of all countries, Scotland is that which presents the main questions relating to it in the clearest form, my personal knowledge and feelings enable me to arrange aught I have yet to say more easily with reference to the Scottish character than any other. Its analysis will enable me also to point out some specialties in the genius of Sir Walter, Burns, and Carlyle, which English readers cannot usually discern for themselves. I went into the Border country, just now, chiefly to see

the house of Ashestiels: and this morning have re-read, with better insight, the chapter of Lockhart's life which gives account of the sheriff's settlement there; in which chapter there is incidental notice of Mungo Park's last days in Scotland, to which I first pray my readers' close attention.

Mungo had been born in a cottage at Fowlsheils on the Yarrow, nearly opposite Newark Castle. He returns after his first African journey to his native cottage, where Scott visits him, and finds him on the banks of Yarrow, which in that place passes over ledges of rock, forming deep pools between them. Mungo is casting stone after stone into the pools, measuring their depths by the time the bubbles take to rise, and thinking (as he presently tells Scott) of the way he used to sound the turbid African rivers. Meditating, his friend afterwards perceives, on further travel in the distant land.

With what motive, it is important for us to know. As a discoverer—as a missionary—or to escape from ennui? He is at that time practising as a physician among his own people. A more sacred calling cannot be;—by faithful missionary service more good could be done among fair Scotch laddies in a day, than among black Hamites in a lifetime;—of discovery, precious to all humanity, more might be made among the woods and rocks of Ettrick than in the thousand leagues of desert between Atlas and red Edom. Why will he again leave his native stream?

It is clearly not mere baseness of petty vanity that moves him. There is no boastfulness in the man. "On one occasion," says Scott, "the traveller communicated to him some very remarkable adventures which had befallen him in Africa, but which he had not recorded in his book." On Scott's asking the cause of this silence, Mungo answered that "in all cases where he had information to communicate, which he thought of importance to the public, he had stated the facts boldly, leaving it to his readers to give such credit to his statements as they might appear justly to deserve; but that he would not shock their faith, or render his travels more marvellous, by introducing circumstances which, however true, were of little or no moment, as they related solely to his own personal adventures and escapes."

Clearly it is not vanity, of Alpine-club kind, that the Old Serpent is tempting this man with. But what then? "His thoughts had always continued to be haunted with Africa." He told Scott that whenever he awoke suddenly in the night, he fancied himself still a prisoner in the tent of Ali; but when Scott expressed surprise that he should intend again to re-visit those scenes, he answered that he would rather brave Africa and all its horrors, than "*wear out his life in long and toilsome rides over the hills of Scotland, for which the remuneration was hardly enough to keep soul and body together.*"

I have italicized the whole sentence, for it is a terrific one. It signifies, if you look into it, almost total absence

of the instinct of personal duty,—total absence of belief in the God who chose for him his cottage birthplace, and set him his life-task beside it ;—absolute want of interest in his profession, of sense for natural beauty, and of compassion for the noblest poor of his native land. And, with these absences, there is the clear presence of the fatallest of the vices, Avarice,—in the exact form in which it was the ruin of Scott himself,—the love of money for the sake of worldly position.

I have purposely placed the instinct for natural beauty, and compassion for the poor, in the same breath of the sentence ;—their relation, as I hope hereafter to show, is constant. And the *total* want of compassion, in its primary root of sympathy, is shown in its naked fear-someness in the next sentence of the tale.

“Towards the end of the autumn, Park paid Scott a farewell visit, and slept at Ashestiell. Next morning his host accompanied him homewards over the wild chain of hills between the Tweed and the Yarrow. Park talked much of his new scheme, and mentioned his determination *to tell his family that he had some business for a day or two in Edinburgh, and send them his blessing from thence without returning to take leave.*” He had married not long before a pretty and amiable woman ; and when they reached the Williamhope Ridge, “the autumnal mist floating heavily and slowly down the valley of the Yarrow” presented to Scott’s imagination “a striking emblem of the troubled and uncertain

prospect which his undertaking afforded." He remained however unshaken, and at length they reached the spot where they had agreed to separate. A small ditch divided the moor from the road, and in going over it, Park's horse stumbled and nearly fell.

"I am afraid, Mungo," said the sheriff, "that is a bad omen." To which he answered, smiling, "*Freits* (omens) follow those who look to them." With this expression Mungo struck the spurs into his horse, and Scott never saw him again.

"*Freits* follow those who look to them." Words absolutely true, (with their converse, that they cease to follow those who do *not* look to them :) of which truth I will ask the consenting reader to consider a little while.

He may perhaps think Mungo utters it in all wisdom, as already passing from the darkness and captivity of superstition into the marvellous light of secure Science and liberty of Thought. A wiser man, are we to hold Mungo, than Walter,—then? and wiser—how much more, than his forefathers?

I do not know on what authority Lockhart interprets "freit," as only meaning 'omen.' In the Douglas glossary it means 'aid,' or 'protection'; it is the word used by Jove, declaring that he will not give 'freit' from heaven either to Trojan or Rutulian; and I believe it always to have the sense of *serviceable* warning—protective, if watched and obeyed. I am not here concerned with the question how far such guidance has been, or is still,

given to those who look for it ; but I wish the reader to note that the form of Celtic intellect which rejected the ancient faith was certainly not a higher one than that which received it. And this I shall best show by taking the wider ground of enquiry, how far Scott's own intellect was capable of such belief,—and whether in its strength or weakness.

In the analysis of his work, given in the 'Nineteenth Century' in 'Fiction, Fair and Foul,' I have accepted twelve novels as characteristic and essentially good,—naming them in the order of their production. These twelve were all written in twelve years, before he had been attacked by any illness ; and of these, the first five exhibit the natural progress of his judgment and faith, in the prime years of his life, between the ages of forty-three and forty-eight.

In the first of them, 'Waverley,' the supernatural element is admitted with absolute frankness and simplicity, the death of Colonel Gardiner being foretold by the, at that time well attested, faculty of second sight,—and both the captivity and death of Fergus McIvor by the personal phantom, hostile and fatal to his house.

In the second, 'Guy Mannering,' the supernatural warning is not allowed to reach the point of actual vision. It is given by the stars, and by the strains in the thread spun at the child's birth by his gipsy guardian.

In the third, 'The Antiquary,' the supernatural influence reduces itself merely to a feverish dream, and to the

terror of the last words of Elspeth of the Craigburn-foot : "I'm coming, my leddy—the staircase is as mirk as a Yule midnight."

In the fourth, 'Old Mortality,' while Scott's utmost force is given to exhibit the self-deception of religious pride, imagining itself inspired of heaven, the idea of prophetic warning is admitted as a vague possibility, with little more of purpose than to exalt the fortitude of Claverhouse ; and in the two last stories of his great time, 'Rob Roy,' and 'The Heart of Midlothian,' all suggestion whatever of the interference of any lower power than that of the Deity in the order of this world has been refused, and the circumstances of the tales are confined within the limits of absolute and known truth.

I am in the habit of placing 'The Heart of Midlothian' highest of all his works, because in this element of intellectual truth, it is the strictest and richest ;—because, being thus rigid in truth, it is also the most exalted in its conception of human character ;—and lastly, because it is the clearest in acknowledgment of the overruling justice of God, even to the uttermost, visiting the sin of the fathers upon the children, and purifying the forgiven spirit without the remission of its punishment.

In the recognition of these sacred laws of life it stands alone among Scott's works, and may justly be called the greatest : yet the stern advance in moral purpose which it indicates is the natural consequence of the discipline

of age—not the sign of increased mental faculty. The entire range of faculty, imaginative and analytic together, is unquestionably the highest when the sense of the supernatural is most distinct,—Scott is *all himself* only in ‘Waverley’ and the ‘Lay.’

No line of modern poetry has been oftener quoted with thoughtless acceptance than Wordsworth’s:

“Heaven lies about us in our infancy.”

It is wholly untrue in the implied limitation; if life be led under heaven’s law, the sense of heaven’s nearness only deepens with advancing years, and is assured in death. But the saying is indeed true thus far, that in the dawn of virtuous life every enthusiasm and every perception may be trusted as of divine appointment; and the *maxima reverentia* is due not only to the innocence of children, but to their inspiration.

And it follows that through the ordinary course of mortal failure and misfortune, in the career of nations no less than of men, the error of their intellect, and the hardening of their hearts, may be accurately measured by their denial of spiritual power.

In the life of Scott, beyond comparison the greatest intellectual force manifested in Europe since Shakespeare, the lesson is given us with a clearness as sharp as the incision on a Greek vase. The very first mental effort for which he obtained praise was the passionate recitation of the passage in the ‘Eneid,’ in which the ghost of

Hector appears to Eneas. And the deadliest sign of his own approaching death is in the form of incredulity which dictated to his weary hand the ‘Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft.’

Here, for the present, I must leave the subject to your own thought,—only desiring you to notice, for general guidance, the gradations of impression on the feelings of men of strong and well-rounded intellect, by which fancy rises towards faith.

The lowest stage is that of wilfully grotesque fancy, which is recognized as false, yet dwelt upon with delight and finished with accuracy, as the symbol or parable of what is true.

Shakespeare’s Puck, and the Dwarf Goblin of the ‘Lay,’ are precisely alike in this first level of the imagination. Shakespeare does not believe in Bottom’s translation; neither does Scott that, when the boy Buccleugh passes the drawbridge with the dwarf, the sentinel only saw a terrier and lurcher passing out. Yet both of them permit the fallacy, because they acknowledge the Elfin power in nature, to make things, sometimes for good, sometimes for harm, seem what they are not. Nearly all the grotesque sculpture of the great ages, beginning with the Greek Chimæra, has this nascent form of Faith for its impulse.

II. The ghosts and witches of Shakespeare, and the Bodach Glas and White Lady of Scott, are expressions of real belief, more or less hesitating and obscure,

Scott's worldliness too early makes him deny his convictions, and in the end effaces them. But Shakespeare remains sincerely honest in his assertion of the uncomprehended spiritual presence ; with this further subtle expression of his knowledge of mankind, that he never permits a spirit to show itself but to men of the highest intellectual power. To Hamlet, to Brutus, to Macbeth, to Richard III. ; but the royal Dane does not haunt his own murderer,—neither does Arthur, King John ; neither Norfolk, King Richard II. ; nor Tybalt, Romeo.

III. The faith of Horace in the spirit of the fountain of Brundusium, in the Faun of his hillside, and in the help of the greater gods, is constant, vital, and practical ; yet in some degree still tractable by his imagination, as also that of the great poets and painters of Christian times. In Milton, the tractability is singular ; he hews his gods out to his own fancy, and then believes in them ; but in Giotto and Dante the art is always subjected to the true vision.

IV. The faith of the saints and prophets, rising into serenity of knowledge, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," is a state of mind of which ordinary men cannot reason ; but which in the practical power of it, has always governed the world, and must for ever. No dynamite will ever be invented that can rule ;—it can but dissolve and destroy. Only the Word of God and the heart of man can govern.

I have been led far, but to the saving of future time,

by the examination of the difference in believing power between the mind of Scott and his unhappy friend. I now take up my immediate subject of enquiry, the effect upon Scott's own mind of the natural scenery of the native land he loved so dearly. His life, let me first point out to you, was, in all the joyful strength of it, spent in the valley of the Tweed. Edinburgh was his school, and his office; but his home was always by Tweedside: and more perfectly so, because in three several places during the three clauses of life. You must remember also the cottage at Lasswade for the first years of marriage, and Sandy Knowe for his childhood; but, allowing to Smailholm Tower and Roslin Glen whatever collateral influence they may rightly claim over the babe and the bridegroom, the constant influences of home remain divided strictly into the three æras at Rosebank, Ashestiel, and Abbotsford.

Rosebank, on the lower Tweed, gave him his close knowledge of the district of Flodden Field: and his store of foot-traveller's interest in every glen of Ettrick, Yarrow, and Liddel-water.

The vast tract of country to which these streams owe their power is composed of a finely-grained dark and hard sandstone, whose steep beds are uniformly and simultaneously raised into masses of upland, which nowhere present any rugged or broken masses of crag, like those of our Cumberland mountains, and are rarely steep enough anywhere to break the grass by weathering;

a moderate shaly—or, rather, gritty—slope of two or three hundred feet opposite Ashestielf itself, being noticeable enough, among the rounded monotony of general form, to receive the separate name of “the Slidders.” Towards the bottom of a dingle, here and there, a few feet of broken bank may show what the hills consist of; but the great waves of them rise against the horizon without a single peak, crest, or cleft to distinguish one from another, though in their true scale of mountain strength heaved into heights of 1,500 or 2,000 feet; and covering areas of three or four square leagues for each of the surges. The dark rock weathers easily into surface soil, which forms for the greater part good pasture, with interspersed patches of heath or peat, and, Liddesdale-way, rushy and sedgy moorland, good for little to man or beast.

Much rain falls over the whole district; but, for a great part of its falling time, in the softly-diffused form of Scotch mist, absorbed invisibly by the grass soil; while even the heavier rain, having to deal with broad surfaces of serenely set rock, and finding no ravines in which it can concentrate force, nor any loose lighter soil to undermine, threads its way down to the greater glens in gradual and deliberate confluence, nobody can well see how; there are no Lodoses nor Bruar waters, still less Staubbachs or Giesbachs; unnoticed, by million upon million of feebly glistening streamlets, or stealthy and obscure springs, the cloudy dew descends towards the

river, and the mysterious strength of its stately water rises or declines indeed, as the storm impends or passes away ; yet flows for ever with a serenity of power unknown to the shores of all other mountain lands.

And the more wonderful, because the uniformity of the hill-substance renders the *slope* of the river as steady as its supply. In all other mountain channels known to me, the course of the current is here open, and there narrow—sometimes pausing in extents of marsh cord lake, sometimes furious in rapids, precipitate in cataracts, or lost in subterranean caves. But the classic Scottish streams have had their beds laid for them, ages and ages ago, in vast accumulations of rolled shingle, which, occupying the floor of the valleys from side to side in apparent level, yet subdue themselves with a steady fall towards the sea.

As I drove from Abbotsford to Ashestiel, Tweed and Ettrick were both in flood ; not dun nor wrathful, but in the clear fulness of their perfect strength ; and from the bridge of Ettrick I saw the two streams join, and the Tweed for miles down the vale, and the Ettrick for miles up among his hills,—each of them, in the multitude of their windless waves, a march of infinite light, dazzling,—interminable,—intervaled indeed with eddies of shadow, but, for the most part, gliding paths of sunshine, far-swept beside the green glow of their level inches, the blessing of them, and the guard :—the stately moving of the many waters, more peaceful than their calm, only

mighty, their rippled spaces fixed like orient clouds, their pools of pausing current binding the silver edges with a gloom of amber and gold; and all along their shore, beyond the sward, and the murmurous shingle, processions of dark forest, in strange majesty of sweet order, and unwounded grace of glorious age.

The house of Ashestiēl itself is only three or four miles above this junction of Tweed and Ettrick.\* It has been sorrowfully changed since Sir Walter's death, but the essential make and set of the former building can still be traced. There is more excuse for Scott's flitting to Abbotsford than I had guessed, for *this* house stands, conscious of the river rather than commanding it, on a brow of meadowy bank, falling so steeply to the water that nothing can be seen of it from the windows. Beyond, the pasture-land rises steep three or four hundred feet against the northern sky, while behind the house, south and east, the moorlands lift themselves in gradual distance to still greater height, so that virtually neither sunrise nor sunset can be seen from the deep-nested dwelling. A tricklet of stream wavers to and fro down to it from the moor, through a grove of entirely natural wood,—oak, birch, and ash, fantastic and bewildering, but nowhere gloomy or decayed, and carpeted with anemone. Between this wild avenue and the house, the old garden remains as

\* I owe to the courtesy of Dr. Matthews Duncan the privilege of quiet sight both of the house and its surroundings.

it used to be, large, gracious, and tranquil ; its high walls swept round it in a curving line like a war rampart, following the ground ; the fruit-trees, trained a century since, now with grey trunks a foot wide, flattened to the wall like sheets of crag ; the strong bars of their living trellis charged, when I saw them, with clusters of green-gage, soft bloomed into gold and blue ; and of orange-pink magnum bonum, and crowds of ponderous pear, countless as leaves. Some open space of grass and path, now all redesigned for modern needs, must always have divided the garden from what was properly the front of the house, where the main entrance is now, between advanced wings, of which only the westward one is of Sir Walter's time : its ground floor being the drawing-room, with his own bedroom of equal size above, cheerful and luminous both, enfilading the house front with their large side windows, which commanded the sweep of Tweed down the valley, and some high masses of Ettrick Forest beyond, this view being now mostly shut off by the opposite wing, added for symmetry ! But Sir Walter saw it fair through the morning clouds when he rose, holding himself, nevertheless, altogether regardless of it, when once at work. At Ashestiell and Abbotsford alike, his work-room is strictly a writing-office, what windows they have being designed to admit the needful light, with an extremely narrow vista of the external world. Courtyard at Abbots-

ford, and bank of young wood beyond : nothing at Ashestiels but the green turf of the opposite fells with the sun on it, if sun there were, and silvery specks of passing sheep.

The room itself, Scott's true 'memorial' if the Scotch people had heart enough to know him, or remember, is a small parlour on the ground-floor of the north side of the house, some twelve feet deep by eleven wide ; the single window little more than four feet square, or rather four feet *cube*, above the desk, which is set in the recess of the mossy wall, the light thus entering in front of the writer, and reflected a little from each side. This window is set to the left in the end wall, leaving a breadth of some five feet or a little more on the fireplace side, where now, brought here from Abbotsford, stands the garden chair of the last days.

Contentedly, in such space and splendour of domicile, the three great poems were written, 'Waverley' begun ; and all the make and tenure of his mind confirmed, as it was to remain, or revive, through after time of vanity, trouble, and decay.

A small chamber, with a fair world outside :—such are the conditions, as far as I know or can gather, of all greatest and best mental work. At heart, the monastery cell always, changed sometimes, for special need, into the prison cell. But, as I meditate more and more closely what reply I may safely make to

the now eagerly pressed questioning of my faithful scholars, what books I would have them read, I find the first broadly-swept definition may be — Books written in the country. None worth spending time on, and few that are quite safe to touch, have been written in towns.

And my next narrowing definition would be, Books that have good music in them,—that are rightly-rhythmic: a definition which includes the delicacy of perfect prose, such as Scott's; and which excludes at once a great deal of modern poetry, in which a dislocated and convulsed versification has been imposed on the ear in the attempt to express uneven temper, and unprincipled feeling.

By unprincipled feeling, I mean whatever part of passion the writer does not clearly discern for right or wrong, and concerning which he betrays the reader's moral judgment into false sympathy or compassion. No really great writer ever does so: neither Scott, Burns, nor Byron ever waver for an instant, any more than Shakespeare himself, in their estimate of what is fit and honest, or harmful and base. Scott always punishes even error, how much more fault, to the uttermost; nor does Byron, in his most defiant and mocking moods, ever utter a syllable that defames virtue, or disguises sin.

In looking back to my former statement in the third volume of 'Modern Painters,' of the influence of

natural scenery on these three men, I was unjust both to it and to them, in my fear of speaking too favourably of passions with which I had myself so strong personal sympathy. Recent Vandalism has taught me, too cruelly, and too late, the moral value of such scenes as those in which I was brought up; and given it me, for my duty to the future to teach the Love of the fair Universe around us, as the beginning of Piety, and the end of Learning.

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The reader may be interested in comparing with the description in the text, Scott's first fragmentary stanzas relating to the sources of the Tweed. Lockhart, vol. i., p. 314.

" Go sit old Cheviot's crest below,  
And pensive mark the lingering snow  
In all his scaurs abide,  
And slow dissolving from the hill  
In many a sightless soundless rill,  
Feed sparkling Bowmont's tide.

" Fair shines the stream by bank and lea,  
As wimpling to the eastern sea  
She seeks Till's sullen bed,  
Indenting deep the fatal plain,  
Where Scotland's noblest, brave in vain,  
Around their monarch bled.

“ And westward hills on hills you see,  
Even as old Ocean’s mightiest sea  
Heaves high her waves of foam,  
Dark and snow-ridged from Cutsfeld’s wold  
To the proud foot of Cheviot roll’d,  
Earth’s mountain billows come.”

# FORS CLAVIGERA.

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## LETTERS

*TO THE WORKMEN AND LABOURERS  
OF GREAT BRITAIN.*

BY JOHN RUSKIN, LL.D.

### LETTER THE 93rd.

(NINTH OF NEW SERIES.)

CHRISTMAS, 1883.

INVOCATION.



GEORGE ALLEN,  
SUNNYSIDE, ORPINGTON, KENT.

1



**LETTER THE 93rd.**

**INVOCATION.**

MY Christmas letter, which I have extreme satisfaction in trusting this little lady to present to you, comes first to wish the St. George's Company, and all honest men, as merry a Christmas as they can make up their minds to; (though, under present circumstances, the merriment, it seems to me, should be temperate, and the feasting moderate,)—and in the second place, to assure the St. George's Company both of its own existence, and its Master's, which, without

any extreme refinement of metaphysics, the said Company might well begin to have some doubt of—seeing that there has been no report made of its business, nor record of its additional members, nor catalogue of its additional properties, given since the—I don't know what day of—I don't know what year.

I am not going to ask pardon any more for these administrative defects, or mysterious silences, because, so far as they are results of my own carelessness or procrastination, they are unpardonable; and so far as they might deserve indulgence if explained, it could only be justified by the details, otherwise useless, of difficulty or disappointment in which more than one of our members have had their share—and of which *their* explanations might sometimes take a different shape from mine. Several have left us, whose secession grieved me; one or two, with my full consent. Others, on the contrary, have been working with their whole hearts and minds, while the Master was too ill to take note of their labour: and, owing, I believe, chiefly to that unpraised zeal, but in a measure also to the wider reading and better understanding of 'Fors' itself, new members are rapidly joining us, and, I think, all are at present animated with better and more definite hope than heretofore.

The accounts of the Company,—which, instead of encumbering 'Fors,' as they used to do, it seems to me now well to print in a separate form, to be pre-

sented to the Companions with the recommendation not to read it, but to be freely purchaseable by the public who may be curious in literature of that kind,—do not, in their present aspect, furnish a wide basis for the confidence I have just stated to be increasing. But, in these days, that we are entirely solvent, and cannot be otherwise, since it is our principal law of business never to buy anything till we have got the money to pay for it,—that whatever we have bought, we keep, and don't try to make a bad bargain good by swindling anybody else,—that, at all events, a certain quantity of the things purchased on such terms are found to be extremely useful and agreeable possessions by a daily increasing number of students, readers, and spectators, at Sheffield and elsewhere,—and that we have at this Christmas-time of 1883 £4,000 and some odd hundreds of stock, with, besides the lands and tenements specified in my last report, conditional promise of a new and better site for the St. George's Museum at Sheffield, and of £5,000 to begin the building thereof,—these various facts and considerations do, I think, sufficiently justify the Companions of St. George in sitting down peaceful-minded, so far as regards their business matters, to their Christmas cheer; and perhaps also the Master in calling with confidence on all kind souls whom his words may reach, to augment the hitherto narrow fellowship.

Of whose nature, I must try to sum in this 'Fors' what I have had often to repeat in private letters.

First, that the St. George's Guild is not a merely sentimental association of persons who want sympathy in the general endeavour to do good. It is a body constituted for a special purpose: that of buying land, holding it inviolably, cultivating it properly, and bringing up on it as many honest people as it will feed. It means, therefore, the continual, however slow, accumulation of landed property, and the authoritative management of the same; and every new member joining it shares all rights in that property, and has a vote for the re-election or deposition of its Master. Now, it would be entirely unjust to the Members who have contributed to the purchase of our lands, or of such funds and objects of value as we require for the support and education of the persons living on them, if the Master allowed the entrance of Members who would have equal control over the Society's property, without contributing to it. Nevertheless, I sometimes receive Companions whose temper and qualities I like, though they may be unable to help us with money, (otherwise it might be thought people had to pay for entrance,) but I can't see why there should not be plenty of people in England both able and willing to help us; whom I once more very solemnly call upon to do so, as thereby exercising the quite healthiest and straightforwardest power of Charity. They can't

make the London or Paris landlords emancipate *their poor*, (even if it were according to sound law to make such an endeavour). But they can perfectly well become landlords themselves, and emancipate their *own*.

And I beg the readers alike, and the despisers of my former pleadings in this matter, to observe that all the recent agitation of the public mind, concerning the dwellings of the poor, is merely the sudden and febrile, (Heaven be thanked, though, for such fever !) recognition of the things which I have been .these twenty years trying to get recognized, and reiterating description and lamentation of—even to the actual printing of my pages blood-red—to try if I could catch the eye at least, when I could not the ear or the heart. In my index, under the head of ‘Misery,’ I know not yet what accumulation of witness may be gathered,—but let the reader think, now, only what the single sentence meant which I quoted from the Evening news in the last ‘Fors’ I wrote before my great illness (March, 1878, p. 84), “The mother got impatient, *thrust the child into the snow*, and hurried on—not looking back.” There is a Christmas card, with a picture of English ‘nativity’ for you—O suddenly awakened friends ! And again, take this picture of what Mr. Tenniel calls John Bull guarding his Pudding, authentic from the iron-works of Tredegar, 11th February, 1878 (p. 99): “For several months the average earnings have been

six shillings a week, and out of that they have to pay for *coal*, and *house rent* and other expenses, (the rent-collector never out of *his* work), leaving very little for food or clothing. In my district there are a hundred and thirty families in distress ; they have nothing but rags to cover them by day, and very little beside that wearing apparel to cover them on their beds at night,—they have sold or pawned their furniture, and everything for which they could obtain the smallest sum of money ; many of them are some days every week without anything to eat,—and with nothing but water to drink”—and *that* poisoned, probably.

Was not this, the last message I was able to bring to John Bull concerning his Pudding, enough to make him think how he might guard it better? But on first recovery of my power of speech, was not the news I brought of the state of La Belle France worth *her* taking to thought also?—“In a room two yards and a half broad by four yards and three-quarters long, a husband, wife, and four children, of whom two were dead two months afterwards,—of those left, the eldest daughter ‘had still the strength to smile.’ Hunger had reduced this child, who would have been beautiful, nearly to the state of a skeleton.” (*Fors*, Letter IV. New Series, p. 118, and see the sequel.)

And the double and treble horror of all this, note you well, is that, not only the tennis-playing and railroad-flying public trip round the outskirts of it,

and whirl over the roofs of it,—blind and deaf; but that the persons interested in the maintenance of it have now a whole embodied Devil's militia of base littérateurs in their bound service;—the worst form of serfs that ever human souls sank into—partly conscious of their lying, partly, by dint of daily repetition, believing in their own babble, and totally occupied in every journal and penny magazine all over the world, in declaring this present state of the poor to be glorious and enviable, as compared with the poor that have been. In which continual pother of parroquet lie, and desperately feigned defence of all things damnable, this nineteenth century stutters and shrieks alone in the story of mankind. Whatever men did before now, of fearful or fatal, they did openly. Attila does not say his horse-hoof is of velvet. Ezzelin deigns no disguise of his Paduan massacre. Prince Karl of Austria fires his red-hot balls in the top of daylight, “at stroke of noon, on the shingle roofs of the weavers of Zittau in dry July, ten thousand innocent souls shrieking in vain to Heaven and Earth, and before sunset Zittau is ashes and red-hot walls,—not Zittau, but a cinder-heap,” \*—but Prince Karl never says it was the best thing that could have been done for the weavers of Zittau,—and that all charitable men hereafter are to do the like for all weavers, if feasible. But your nineteenth century prince of shams and

\* Friedrich, v. 124.

shambles, sells for his own behoof the blood and ashes, preaches, with his steam-throat, the gospel of gain from ruin, as the only true and only Divine, and fills at the same instant the air with his darkness, the earth with his cruelty, the waters with his filth, and the hearts of men with his lies.

Of which the primary and all-pestilentialest is the one formalized now into wide European faith by political economists, and bruited about, too, by frantic clergymen! that you are not to give alms, (any more than you are to fast, or pray),—that you are to benefit the poor entirely by your own eating and drinking, and that it is their glory and eternal praise to fill your pockets and stomach,—and themselves die, and be thankful. Concerning which falsehood, observe, whether you be Christian or not, *this* unquestionable mark it has of infinite horror, that the persons who utter it have themselves lost their *joy* in giving — cannot conceive that strange form of practical human felicity —it is more ‘blessed’ (not *benedictum*, but *beatum*) to give than to receive—and that the entire practical life and delight of a ‘lady’ is to be a ‘loaf-giver,’ as of a lord to be a land-giver. It is a degradation —forsooth—for your neighbour’s child to receive a loaf, and you are pained in giving it one; your own children are not degraded in receiving their breakfast, are they? and you still have some satisfaction of a charitable nature in seeing *them* eat it? It is a

degradation to a bedridden pauper to get a blanket from the Queen ! how, then, shall the next bedded bride of May Fair boast of the carcanet from her ?

Now, therefore, my good Companions of the Guild,—all that are, and Companions all, that are to be,—understand this, now and evermore, that you come forward to be Givers, not Receivers, in this human world : that you are to *give* your time, your thoughts, your labour, and the reward of your labour, so far as you can spare it, for the help of the poor and the needy, (they are not the same personages, mind : the ‘poor’ are in constant, healthy, and accepted relations to you,—the needy, in conditions requiring change) ; and observe, in the second place, that you are to work, so far as circumstances admit of your doing so, with your own hands, in the production of substantial means of life—food, clothes, house, or fire—and that *only by such* labour can you either make your own living, or anybody else’s. One of our lately admitted Companions wrote joyfully and proudly to me the other day that she was ‘making her own living,’ meaning that she was no burden to her family, but supported herself by teaching. To whom I answered,—and be the answer now generally understood by all our Companions,—that *nobody* can live by teaching, any more than by learning : that both teaching and learning are proper duties of human life, or pleasures of it, but have nothing whatever to do with the support of it,

Food can only be got out of the ground, or the air, or the sea. What you have done in fishing, fowling, digging, sowing, watering, reaping, milling, shepherding, shearing, spinning, weaving, building, carpentering, slating, coal-carrying, cooking, costermongering, and the like,—that is St. George's *work*, and means of power. All the rest is St. George's play, or his devotion—not his labour.

And the main message St. George brings to you is that *you* will not be degraded by this work nor saddened by it,—*you*, who in righteous will and modest resignation, take it upon you for your servant-yoke, as true servants, no less than children, of your Father in Heaven; but, so far as it *does* mean an acknowledgement that you are not better than the poor, and are content to share their lowness in that humility, you enter into the very soul and innermost good of sacred monastic life, and have the loveliness and sanctity of it, without the sorrow or the danger; separating yourselves from the world and the flesh, only in their sin and in their pain. Nor, so far as the praise of men may be good and helpful to you, and, above all, good for *them* to give you, will it ever be wanting. Do you yourself—even if you are one of these who glory in idleness—think less of Florentine Ida because she is a working girl? or esteem the feeling in which “everybody called her ‘Signora’” less honourable than the crowd's stare at my lady in her carriage?

But above all, you separate yourself from the world in its sorrow. There are no chagrins so venomous as the chagrins of the idle; there are no pangs so sickening as the satieties of pleasure. Nay, the bitterest and most enduring sorrow may be borne through the burden and heat of day bravely to the due time of death, by a true worker. And, indeed, it is this very dayspring and fount of peace in the bosoms of the labouring poor which has till now rendered their oppression possible. Only the idle among *them* revolt against their state;—the brave workers die passively, young and old—and make no sign. It is for you to pity them, for you to stand with them, for you to cherish, and save.

And be sure there are thousands upon thousands already leading such life—who are joined in no recognized fellowship, but each in their own place doing happy service to all men. Read this piece of a friend's letter, received only a day or two since, while I was just thinking what plainest examples I could give you from real life.

"I have just returned from W——, where I lived in a house of which the master was a distributor of sacks of grain, in the service of a dealer in grain, while his two daughters did, one of them the whole work of the house, including attendance on the old mother who was past work, and the other the managing of a little shop in the village,—work, with all" (father

and daughters) "beginning at five a.m. I was there for some months, and was perfectly dealt with, and never saw a fault. What I wanted to tell you was that the daughter, who was an admirable cook, was conversant with her poets, quoted Wordsworth and Burns, when I led her that way, and knew all about Brantwood, as she had carefully treasured an account of it from an old Art Journal."

'Perfectly dealt with.' Think what praise is in those three words!—what straightforward understanding, on both sides, of true hospitality! Think, (for one of the modes of life quickest open to you—and serviceablest,)—what roadside-inns might be kept by a true Gaius and Gaia! You have perhaps held it—in far back 'Fors' one of my wildest sayings, that every village should have, as a Holy Church at one end, a Holy Tavern at the other! I will better the saying now by adding—"they may be side by side, if you will." And then you will have entered into another mystery of monastic life, as you shall see by the plan given of a Cistercian Monastery in the second forthcoming number of 'Valle Crucis'—where, appointed in its due place with the Church, the Scriptorium and the school, is the Hospitium for entertaining strangers unawares. And why not awares also? Judge what the delight of travelling would be, for nice travellers, (read the word 'nice' in any sense you will)—if at every village there were a Blue Boar, or a Green Dragon, or Silver

Swan\*—with Mark Tapley of the Dragon for Ostler—and Boots of the Swan for Boots—and Mrs. Lupin or Mrs. Lirriper for Hostess—only trained at Girton in all that becomes a Hostess in the nineteenth century! Gentle girl-readers mine, is it any excess of Christianity in you, do you think, that makes you shrink from the notion of being such an one, instead of the Curate's wife?

My time fails me—my thoughts how much more—in trying to imagine what this sweet world will be, when the meek inherit it indeed, and the lowliness of *every* faithful handmaiden has been regarded of her Lord. For the day *will* come, the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever. Not by might, nor by power, but by His Spirit—the meek shall He guide in judgment, and the meek shall He teach His way.

\* "And should I once again, as once I may,  
Visit Martigny, I will not forget  
Thy hospitable roof, Marguerite de Tours,  
Thy sign the Silver Swan. Heaven prosper thee."  
(ROGERS' 'Italy'.)

In my schools at Oxford I have placed, with Mr. Ward's beautiful copy of Turner's vignette of the old Cygne, at Martigny, my own early drawing of the corridor of its neighbour inn "La Poste,"—once itself a convent.

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**CHRISTMAS POSTSCRIPT.**

In the following alphabetical list of our present Companions, I have included only those who, I believe, will not blame me for giving their names in full,\* and in whose future adherence and support I have entire trust; for, although some of them have only lately joined us, they have done so, I think, with clearer knowledge of the nature and working of the Guild than many former Companions who for various causes have seen good to withdraw. But some names of members may be omitted, owing to the scattered registry of them while I was travelling, or perhaps forgotten registry during my illnesses. I trust that in the better hope and more steady attention which I am now able to bring to the duties of the Mastership, the list may soon be accurately completed, and widely enlarged. One Companion, ours no more, sends you, I doubt not, Christmas greeting from her Home,—FLORENCE BENNETT. Of her help to us during her pure brief life, and afterwards, by her father's fulfilment of her last wishes, you shall hear at another time.

\* I only give the first Christian name, for simplicity's sake, unless the second be an indication of family

\* ADA HARTNELL.  
ALBERT FLEMING.  
ALICE KNIGHT.  
\* ANNIE SOMERSCALES.  
\* BLANCHE ATKINSON.  
DAVID CAMPBELL.  
\* DORA LEES.  
DORA THOMAS.  
EDITH HOPE SCOTT.  
EDITH IRVINE.  
\* EGBERT RYDINGS.  
\* ELIZABETH BARNARD.  
EMILIE SISSISON.  
EMMELINE MILLER.  
ERNEST MILLER.  
\* FANNY TALBOT.  
FERDINAND BLADON.  
\* FRANCES COLENZO.  
\* GEORGE ALLEN.  
GEORGE NEWLANDS.  
GRACE ALLEN.  
HELEN ORMEROD.  
\* HENRIETTA CAREY.  
\* HENRY LARKIN.  
HENRY LUXMORE.  
HENRY WARD.  
JAMES GILL.  
\* JOHN FOWLER.  
\* JOHN MORGAN.  
\* JULIA FIRTH.  
KATHLEEN MARTIN.  
MARGARET COX.  
MAUD BATEMAN.  
\* REBECCA ROBERTS.  
\* ROBERT SOMERVILLE.  
SARAH THOMAS.

- \* SILVANUS WILKINS.
- \* SUSAN BEEVER.
- WILLIAM MONK.
- \* WILLIAM SHARMAN.
- \* WILLIAM SMITHERS.

The names marked with a star were on the original roll of the Guild, when it consisted of only thirty-two Members and the Master.

# FORS CLAVIGERA.

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## LETTERS

*TO THE WORKMEN AND LABOURERS  
OF GREAT BRITAIN.*

By JOHN RUSKIN, LL.D.

**LETTER THE 94th.**

(TENTH OF NEW SERIES.)

MARCH, 1884.

**RETROSPECT.**



GEORGE ALLEN,  
SUNNYSIDE, ORPINGTON, KENT.





## LETTER THE 94th.

### RETROSPECT.

BRANTWOOD, 31st December, 1883.

IT is a provoking sort of fault in our English language, that while one says defect, defection, and defective ; retrospect, retrospection, and retrospective, etc., —one says prospect and prospective, but not prospection ; respect and respective, but not respectation ; perspective, but not perspect, nor perspection ; præfect, but not præfection ; and refection, but not reflect,—with a quite different manner of difference in

the uses of each admitted, or reasons for refusal of each refused, form, in every instance: and therefore I am obliged to warn my readers that I don't mean the above title of this last 'Fors' of 1883 to be substantive, but participle;—that is to say, I don't mean that this letter will be *a retrospect*, or back-prospect, of all 'Fors' that have been; but that it will be in its own tenor, and to a limited distance, *Retrospective*: only I cut the 'ive' from the end of the word, because I want the retrospection to be complete as far as it reaches.

Namely, of the essential contents of the new series of 'Fors' up to the date of this letter; and in connection with them, of the First letter, the Seventeenth, and the Fiftieth, of the preceding series.

I will begin with the seventeenth letter; which bears directly on the school plan given in my report for this year. It will be seen that I struck out in that plan the three R's from among the things promised to be taught, and I wrote privately with some indignation to the Companion who had ventured to promise them, asking her whether she had never read this seventeenth letter; to which she answered that 'inspectors of schools' now required the three R's imperatively,—to which I again answered, with indignation at high pressure, that ten millions of inspectors of schools collected on Cader Idris should not make me teach in my schools, come to them who liked, a single thing I did not choose to.

And I do not choose to teach (as usually understood) the three R's; first, because, as I *do* choose to teach the elements of music, astronomy, botany, and zoology, not only the mistresses and masters capable of teaching these should not waste their time on the three R's; but the children themselves would have no time to spare, nor should they have. If their fathers and mothers can read and count, *they* are the people to teach reading and numbering, to earliest intelligent infancy. For orphans, or children whose fathers and mothers can't read or count, dame schools in every village (best in the almshouses, where there might be dames enow) are all that is wanted.

Secondly. I do not care that St. George's children, as a rule, should learn either reading or writing, because there are very few people in this world who get any good by either. Broadly and practically, whatever foolish people *read*, does *them* harm, and whatever they *write*, does other people harm: (see my notes on Narrs in general, and my own Narr friend in particular, 'Fors,' Vol. V., page 125,) and nothing can ever prevent this, for a fool attracts folly as decayed meat attracts flies, and distils and assimilates it, no matter out of what book;—he can get as much out of the Bible as any other, though of course he or she usually reads only newspaper or novel.\*

\* Just think, for instance, of the flood of human idiotism that spent a couple of years or so of its life in writing, printing, and reading the Tichborne

But thirdly. Even with children of good average sense,—see, for example, what happened in our own Coniston school, only the other day. I went in by

trial,—the whole of that vital energy and time being not only direct loss, but loss in loathsome thoughts and vulgar inquisitiveness. Had it been spent in pure silence, and prison darkness, how much better for all those creatures' souls and eyes! But, if they had been unable to read or write, and made good sailors or woodcutters, they might, instead, have prevented two-thirds of the shipwrecks on our own coast, or made a pestilential province healthy on Ganges or Amazon.

Then think farther—though which of us by any thinking can take measure? —of the pestilence of popular literature, as we perceive it now accommodating itself to the tastes of an enlightened people, in chopping up its formerly loved authors—now too hard for its understanding, and too pure for its appetite—into crammed sausages, or blood-puddings swiftly gorgeable. Think of Miss Braddon's greasy mince-pie of Scott!—and buy, for subject of awed meditation, 'No. 1, One penny, complete in itself' (published by Henry Vickers, 317, Strand), the Story of Oliver Twist, by Charles Dickens, —re-arranged and sublimed into Elixir of Dickens, and Otto of Oliver, and bottled in the following series of aromatic chapters, headed thus:—

- Chap. I. At the Mercy of the Parish.
- II. In the Clutches of the Beadle.
- „ III. Among the Coffins.
- „ IV. Among Thieves.
- „ V. Fagin the Jew.
- „ VI. Before the 'Beak.'
- „ VII. Bill Sikes.
- „ VIII. Nancy.
- „ IX. Nancy Carries on.
- „ X. The Burglary planned.
- „ XI. The Burglary.
- „ XII. A Mysterious Stranger.
- „ XIII. The Murdered Girl.
- „ XIV. The Murderer's Flight.
- „ XV. The Murderer's Death.
- „ XVI. The Jew's Last Night Alive.

chance during the hour for arithmetic ; and, inserting myself on the nearest bench, learned, with the rest of the class, how much seven-and-twenty pounds of bacon would come to at ninepence farthing a pound, with sundry the like marvellous consequences of the laws of number ; until, feeling myself a little shy in remaining always, though undetectedly, at the bottom of the class, I begged the master to let us all rest a little ; and in this breathing interval, taking a sovereign out of my pocket, asked the children if they had ever been shown the Queen's Arms on it ?

(Unanimous silence.)

"At any rate, you know what the Queen's Arms are?" (Not a whisper.)

"What! a roomful of English boys and girls, and nobody know what the Queen's or the King's Arms are—the Arms of England?" (Mouths mostly a little open, but with no purpose of speech. Eyes also, without any immediate object of sight.)

"Do you not even remember seeing such a thing as a harp on them?" (Fixed attention,—no response.)

"Nor a lion on his hind legs? Nor three little beasts running in each corner?" (Attention dissolving into bewilderment.)

"Well, next time I come, mind, you must be able to tell me all about it ;—here's the sovereign to look at, and when you've learnt it, you may divide it—if you can. How many of you are there here to-day?" (Sum

in addition, taking more time than usual, owing to the difficulty of getting the figures to stand still. It is established finally that there are thirty-five.)

“And how many pence in a sovereign?” (Answer instantaneous and vociferous.)

“And thirty-fives in two hundred and forty?” (All of us at pause. The master comes to the rescue, and recommends us to try thirties instead of thirty-fives.)

“It seems, then, if five of you will stand out, the rest can have eightpence apiece. Which of you will stand out?”

And I left *that* question for them to resolve at their leisure, seeing that it contained the essence of an examination in matters very much higher than arithmetic.

And now, suppose that there were any squire’s sons or daughters down here, for Christmas, from Christchurch or Girton, who could and would accurately and explicitly tell these children “all about” the Queen’s Arms : what the Irish Harp meant, and what a Bard was, and ought to be ;—what the Scottish Lion meant, and how he got caged by the tressure of Charlemagne,\* and who Charlemagne was ;—what the English leopards meant, and who the Black Prince was, and how he reigned in Aquitaine,—would not all this be more useful, in all true senses, to the children, than being able, in two

\* See ‘Fors,’ Letter XXV., pp. 12, 13, 14.

seconds quicker than children outside, to say how much twenty-seven pounds of bacon comes to at ninepence farthing a pound? And if then they could be shown, on a map, without any railroads on it,—where Aquitaine was, and Poitiers, and where Picardy, and Crecy, would it not, for children who are likely to pass their lives in Coniston, be more entertaining and more profitable than to learn where “New Orleans” is, (without any new Joan to be named from it), or New Jerusalem, without any new life to be lived in it?

Fourthly. Not only do the arts of literature and arithmetic continually hinder children in the *acquisition* of ideas,—but they are apt greatly to confuse and encumber the *memory* of them. Read now, with renewed care, Plato’s lovely parable of Theuth and the King of Egypt (XVII. 7), and observe the sentences I translated, though too feebly. “It is not medicine (to give the power) of divine memory, but a quack’s drug for memorandum, leaving the memory idle.” I myself, for instance, have written down memoranda of many skies, but have forgotten the skies themselves. Turner wrote nothing,—but remembered all. And this is much more true of things that depend for their beauty on sound and accent; for in the present fury of printing, bad verses, that could not be *heard* without disgust, are continually printed and read as if there was nothing wrong in them; while all the best powers of minstrel, bard and troubadour depended on the memory and voice, as

distinct from writing.\* All which was perfectly known to wise men ages ago, and it is continually intimated in the different forms which the myth of Hermes takes, from this Ibis Theuth of Egypt down to Correggio's most perfect picture of Mercury teaching Cupid to read; —where, if you will look at the picture wisely, you see that it really ought to be called, Mercury trying, and *failing*,† to teach Cupid to read! For, indeed, from the beginning and to the end of time, Love reads without letters, and counts without arithmetic.

But, lastly and chiefly, the personal conceit and ambition developed by reading, in minds of selfish activity, lead to the disdain of manual labour, and the desire of all sorts of unattainable things, and fill the streets with discontented and useless persons, seeking some means of living in town society by their wits. I need not enlarge on this head; every reader's experience must avow the extent and increasing plague of this fermenting imbecility, striving to make for itself what it calls a 'position in life.'

In sight, and thought of all these sources of evil in our present staples of education, I drew out the scheme of schooling, which incidentally and partially defined in various passages of 'Fors' (see mainly

\* See lives of Beatrice and Lucia, in the first number of 'Roadside Songs of Tuscany.'

† Sir Joshua, with less refinement, gives the same meaning to the myth, in his picture of Cupid pouting and recusant, on being required to decipher the word, "pinmoney."

Letter LXVII., Vol. VI., p. 225), I now sum as follows.

Every parish school to have garden, playground, and cultivable land round it, or belonging to it, spacious enough to employ the scholars in fine weather mostly out of doors.

Attached to the building, a children's library, in which the scholars who *care* to read may learn that art as deftly as they like, by themselves, helping each other without troubling the master;—a sufficient laboratory always, in which shall be specimens of all common elements of natural substances, and where simple chemical, optical, and pneumatic experiments may be shown; and according to the size and importance of the school, attached workshops, many or few,—but always a carpenter's, and first of those added in the better schools, a potter's.

In the school itself, the things taught will be music, geometry, astronomy, botany, zoology, to all; drawing, and history, to children who have gift for either. And finally, to all children of whatever gift, grade, or age, the laws of Honour, the habit of Truth, the Virtue of Humility, and the Happiness of Love.

I say, the "virtue of Humility," as including all the habits of Obedience and instincts of Reverence which are dwelt on throughout 'Fors,' and all my other books\*—but the things included are of course the

\* Compare especially 'Crown of Wild Olive,' pp. 157, 165. I repeat

primary ones to be taught, and the thirteenth Aphorism of that sixty-seventh letter cannot be too often repeated, that "Moral education begins in making the creature we have to educate, clean, and obedient." In after time, this "virtue of humility" is to be taught to a child chiefly by gentleness to its failures, showing it that by reason of its narrow powers, it cannot *but* fail. I have seen my old clerical master, the Rev. Thomas Dale, beating his son Tom hard over the head with the edge of a grammar, because Tom could not construe a Latin verse, when the rev. gentleman ought only with extreme tenderness and pitifulness to have explained to Tom that—he wasn't Thomas the Rhymers.

For the definitely contrary cultivation of the vice of Pride, compare the education of Steerforth by Mr. Creakle. ('David Copperfield,' chap. vi.)

But it is to be remembered that humility can only be truly, and therefore only effectively taught, when the master is swift to recognise the special faculties of children, no less than their weaknesses, and that it is his quite highest and most noble function to discern

emphatically the opening sentence—"Educate, or Govern,—they are one and the same word. Education does not mean teaching people to know what they do not know—it means teaching them to behave as they do not behave. It is not teaching the youth of England the shapes of letters and the tricks of numbers, and then leaving them to turn their arithmetic to roguery and their literature to lust. It is, on the contrary, training them into the perfect exercise and kingly continence of their bodies and souls,—by kindness, by watching, by warning, by precept, and by praise,—but above all, by example."

these, and prevent their discouragement or effacement in the vulgar press for a common prize. See the beautiful story of little George, 'Friends in Council.'

Next, as to writing. A certain kind of writing, which will take from half an hour to an hour for a line, will indeed be taught—as long ago promised, in St. George's schools; examples being given of the manner of it at p. 11 of Letter XVI., and Vol. VI., p. 123; but, so far from qualifying the pupil for immediately taking a lucrative clerkship in a Government office, or a county banking-house, or a solicitor's ante-room, the entire aim of our training will be to disqualify him, for ever, from writing with any degree of current speed; and especially from producing any such aeschrography, (as everybody writes Greek-English nowadays, I use this term in order more clearly to explain myself,) as the entry in my own Banker's book facsimiled at p. 14, Vol. VI., and the 'Dec.' for December here facsimiled from a London tradesman's bill just

sent in, *Nlee* or the ornamental R engrossed on my Father's executor's articles of release, engraved at p. 6 of Letter XVI.; but to compel him, on the contrary, to write whatever words deserve to be written in the most perfect and graceful and legible manner possible to his hand.

And in this resolution, stated long since, I am now more fixed than ever; having had much experience

lately of handwriting, and finding, first, that the scholar who among my friends does the *most* as well as the best work, writes the most deliberately beautiful hand: and that all the hands of sensible people agree in being merely a reduction of good print to a form producible by the steady motion of a pen, and are therefore always round, and extremely upright, becoming more or less picturesque according to the humour of the writer, but never slurred into any unbecoming speed, nor subdued by any merely mechanical habit,\* whereas the writing of foolish people is almost always mechanically monotonous; and that of begging-letter writers, with rare exception, much sloped, and sharp at the turns.

It will be the law of our schools, therefore, that the children who want to write clerk's and begging-letter hands, must learn them at home; and will not be troubled by *us* to write at all. The children who want to write like gentlemen and ladies, (like St. Jerome, or Queen Elizabeth, for instance,) will learn, as aforesaid, with extreme slowness. And, if you will now read carefully the fiftieth letter, above referred to, you will find

\* Sir Walter's hand, from the enormous quantity and constancy of his labour, becomes almost mechanical in its steadiness, on the pages of his novels; but is quite free in his letters. Sir Joshua's hand is curiously slovenly; Tintoret's, grotesque and irregular in the extreme; Nelson's, almost a perfect type: especially in the point of not hurrying, see facsimile just before Trafalgar, 'Fors' VI., p. 170. William the Conqueror and his queen Matilda could only sign a cross for their names.

much to meditate upon, respecting home as well as school teaching; more especially the home-teaching of the mining districts (p. 39), and the home library of cheap printing, with the small value of it to little Agnes (p. 32). And as it chances—for I have no more time for retrospect in this letter—I will close it with the record of a lesson received again in Agnes's cottage, last week. Her mother died three years ago; and Agnes, and her sister Isabel, are at service:—another family is in the cottage—and another little girl, younger than Agnes, "Jane Anne," who has two elder brothers, and one little one. The family have been about a year there, beginning farmer's life, after miner's, with much ill-fortune, the last stroke of which was the carrying away of the entire roof of their grange, at midnight, by the gale of 11th December, the timbers of it thundering and splintering over the roof of the dwelling house. The little girl was so terrified that she had a succession of fainting fits next day, and was sent for a week to Barrow, for change of scene. When I went up on Wednesday last to see how things were going on, she had come back that morning, and was sitting with her child-brother on her lap, in the corner by the fireside. I stayed talking to the mother for half an hour, and all that time the younger child was so quiet that I thought it must be ill; but, on my asking,— "Not he," the mother said, "but he's been jumping about all the morning, and making such a fuss about

getting his sister back, that now he's not able to stir."

But the dearest child of the cottage was not there. Last spring they had a little boy, between these two, full of intelligent life, and pearl of chief price to them. He went down to the field by the brook-side (Beck Leven), one bright morning when his elder brother was mowing. The child came up behind without speaking; and the back sweep of the scythe caught the leg, and divided a vein. His brother carried him up to the house; and what swift binding could do was done—the doctor, three miles away, coming as soon as might be, arranged all for the best, and the child lay pale and quiet till the evening, speaking sometimes a little to his father and mother. But at six in the evening he began to sing. Sang on, clearer and clearer, all through the night,—so clear at last, you might have heard him, his mother said, "far out on the moor there." Sang on till the full light of morning, and so passed away.

"Did he sing with words?" I asked.

"Oh, yes; just the bits of hymns he had learnt at the Sunday-school."

So much of his education finally available to him, you observe.

Not the multiplication table *then*, nor catechism *then*, nor commandments *then*,—these rhymes only remained to him for his last happiness.

"Happiness in delirium only," say you?

All true love, all true wisdom, and all true knowledge, seem so to the world: but, without question, the forms of weakness of body preceding death, or those during life which are like them, are the testing states, often the strongest states, of the soul. The "Oh, I could prophesy!" of Harry Percy, is neither dream, nor delirium.

And the lesson I received from that cottage history, and which I would learn with my readers, is of the power for good in what, rightly chosen, has been rightly learned by heart at school, whether it show at the time or not. The hymn may be forgotten in the play-ground, or ineffective afterwards in restraining contrary habits of feeling and life. But all that is good and right retains its unfelt authority; and the main change which I would endeavour to effect in ordinary school discipline is to make the pupils read less, and remember more; exercising them in committing to memory, not by painful effort, but by patient repetition, until they cannot but remember, (and observing always that the accentuation is right,—for if *that* be once right, the understanding will come in due time), helping farther with whatever elementary music, both of chant and instrument, may be familiarly attainable. To which end, may I modestly recommend all musical clergymen, and churchwardens, to dispense—if funds are limited—with organs in the church, in favour of harp, harpsi-

chord, zittern, or peal of bells, in the schoolroom : and to endeavour generally to make the parish enjoy *proper* music out of the church as well as in it, and on Saturday as well as Sunday.

I hope to persevere in these summaries through next letter ; meantime, this curiously apposite passage in one received this morning, from a much valued Companion, needs instant answer (she is the second tutress in a school for young girls, which has been lately begun by a German lady, who is resolved to allow no 'cramming') :—

"We have nineteen pupils now, and more are promised. The children are all progressing satisfactorily, and seem happy, but our path will be up-hill for some time to come. Sewing is in a very backward condition ; the children think it would be better done in the machine. Hardly any of them can write, and we can't get any decent large-hand copy-books. And they don't like poetry ! What is to be done with such matter-of-fact young persons ? On the other hand, they are loveable and intelligent children, much interested in the garden (they are to have little gardens of their own when the spring comes) and the birds. *Birds*, you observe, not merely sparrows ; for though we are only on the edge of the Liverpool smoke we have plenty of robins and starlings, besides one tomtit, and a visit from a chaffinch the other day. We have not been able to begin the cookery class yet, for we

are not actually living at the school ; we hope to take up our abode there next term. Mrs. Green, my 'principal,'—I don't see why I shouldn't say mistress, I like the word much better,—*could* teach spinning if she had a wheel, only then people would say we were insane, and take the children away from us.

"I am very much obliged for last 'Fors,' and delighted to hear that there is a new one nearly ready. But would you please be a little bit more explicit on the subject of 'work' and 'ladyhood.' Not that what you have said already seems obscure to me, but people disagree as to the interpretation of it. The other night I proposed to a few fellow-disciples that we should make an effort to put ourselves in serviceable relationship to some few of our fellow-creatures, and they told me that 'all that was the landlord's business or the capitalist's.' Rather disheartening, to a person who has no hope of ever becoming a landlord or capitalist."

Yes, my dear, and very finely the Landlord and Capitalist—in the sense these people use the words—of land-taxer and labour-taxer, have done that business of theirs hitherto ! Land and labour appear to be discovering—and rather fast now-a-days—that perhaps they might get along by themselves, if they were to try. Of that, more next letter ;—for the answers to your main questions in this,—the sewing is a serious one. The 'little wretches'—(this is a well-trained young lady's expression, not mine)—interjectional on my

reading the passage to her) must be got out of all that as soon as you can. For plain work, get Miss Stanley's book, which gives you the elements of this work at Whitelands,—(I hope, however, to get Miss Greenaway to sketch us a pattern frock or two, instead of the trimmed water-butts of Miss Stanley's present diagrams)—and for fine work, make them every one sew a proper sampler, with plenty of robins in it, and your visitors the tomtit and chaffinch, and any motto they like in illuminated letters, finished with gold thread,—the ground, silk. Then, for my meaning as to women's work, what *should* I mean, but scrubbing furniture, dusting walls, sweeping floors, making the beds, washing up the crockery, ditto the children, and whipping them when they want it,—mending their clothes, cooking their dinners,—and when there are cooks more than enough, helping with the farm work, or the garden, or the dairy? Is *that* plain speaking enough? Have I not fifty times over, in season and out of season, dictated and insisted and asseverated and—what stronger word else there may be—that the essentially right life for all woman-kind is that of the Swiss Paysanne,—and given Gotthelf's Freueli for the perfect type of it, and dedicated to her in 'Proserpina' the fairest pansy in the world, keeping only the poor little one of the sand-hills for Ophelia? But in a rougher way yet—take now the facts of such life in old Scotland, seen with Walter Scott's own eyes.

"I have often heard Scott mention some curious particulars of his first visit to the remote fastness of one of these Highland friends; but whether he told the story of Invernahyle, or of one of his own relations of the Clan Campbell, I do not recollect; I rather think the latter was the case. On reaching the brow of a bleak eminence overhanging the primitive tower and its tiny patch of cultivated ground, he found his host and three sons, and perhaps half a dozen attendant *gillies*, all stretched half asleep in their tartans upon the heath, with guns and dogs, and a profusion of game about them; while in the courtyard, far below, appeared a company of women, actively engaged in loading a cart with manure. The stranger was not a little astonished when he discovered, on descending from the height, that among these industrious females were the laird's own lady, and two or three of her daughters; but they seemed quite unconscious of having been detected in an occupation unsuitable to their rank—retired presently to their 'bowers,' and when they reappeared in other dresses, retained no traces of their morning's work, except complexions glowing with a radiant freshness, for one evening of which many a high-bred beauty would have bartered half her diamonds. He found the young ladies not ill informed, and exceedingly agreeable; and the song and the dance seemed to form the invariable termination of their busy days."

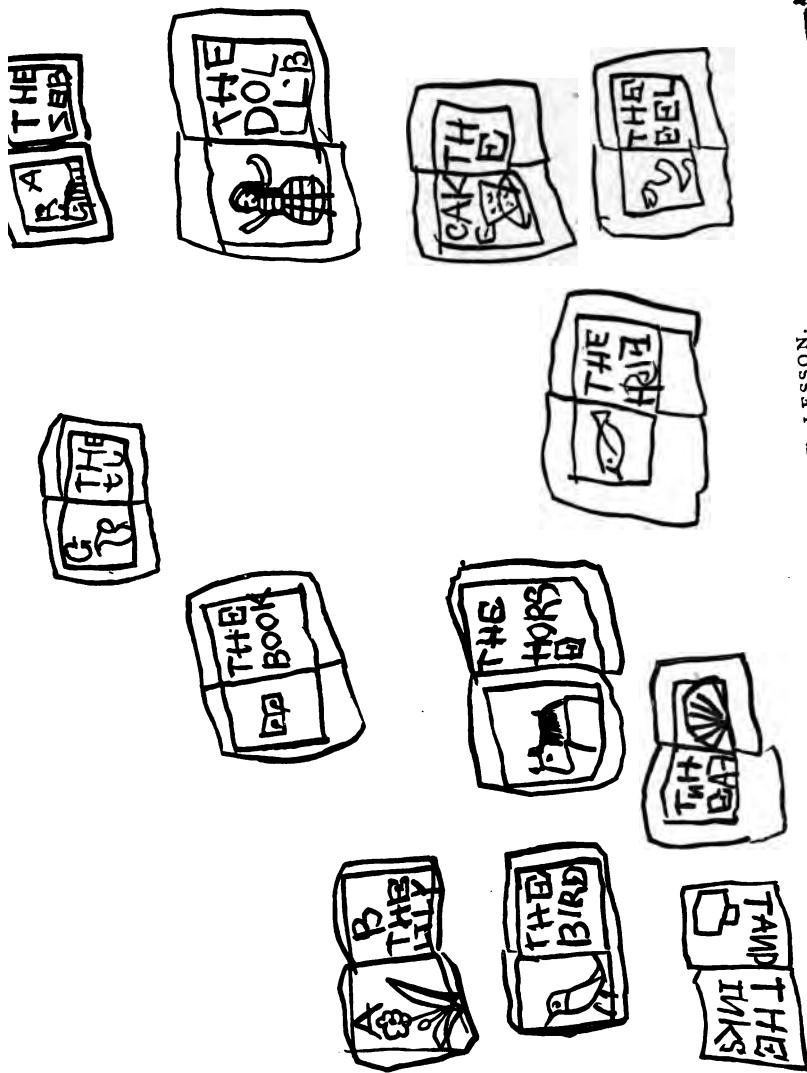
You think such barbarism for ever past? No, my

dears ; it is only the barbarity of idle gentlemen that must pass. *They* will have to fill the carts—you to drive them ; and never any more evade the burden and heat of the day—they, in shooting birds and each other, or you in walking about in sun-hats and parasols,—like this





THE EARLIEST LESSON.



# FORS CLAVIGERA.

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## LETTERS

*TO THE WORKMEN AND LABOURERS  
OF GREAT BRITAIN.*

BY JOHN RUSKIN, LL.D.

LETTER THE 95th.

(ELEVENTH OF NEW SERIES.)

OCTOBER, 1884.

FORS INFANTÆ.



GEORGE ALLEN,  
SUNNYSIDE, ORPINGTON, KENT.





**LETTER THE 95th.**

**FORS INFANTIAE.**

I DO not well know whether it has more distressed, or encouraged me, to find how much is wanting, and how much to be corrected, in the hitherto accepted modes of school education for our youngest children. Here, for the last year or two, I have had the most favourable opportunities for watching and trying various experiments on the minds of country children, most thankfully recognising their native power; and most sorrowfully the inefficiency of the means at the school-

master's disposal, for its occupation and development. For the strengthening of his hands, and that of our village teachers and dames in general, I have written these following notes at speed, for the brevity and slightness of which I must pray the reader's indulgence: he will find the substance of them has been long and deeply considered.

But first let me fulfil the pledge given in last number of 'Fors' by a few final words about the Land Question—needless, if people would read my preceding letters with any care, but useful, as a general heading of them, for those who have not time to do so.

The plan of St. George's Guild is wholly based on the supposed possession of land by hereditary proprietors, inalienably; or if by societies, under certain laws of responsibility to the State.

In common language, and in vulgar thought, the possession of land is confused with "freedom." But no man is so free as a beggar; and no man is more solemnly a servant to God, the king, and the laws of his country, than an honest land-holder.

The nonsense thought and talked about 'Nationalization of Land,' like other nonsense, must have its day, I suppose,—and I hope, soon, its night. All healthy states from the beginning of the world, living on land,\* are founded on hereditary tenure, and perish when either the lords or peasants sell their estates, much more when they let

\* As distinct from those living by trade or piracy.

them out for hire. The single line of the last words of John of Gaunt to Richard II., "Landlord of England art thou now, not King," expresses the root of the whole matter ; and the present weakness of the Peers in their dispute with the Commons is because the Upper House is composed now no more of Seigneurs, but of Landlords.

Possession of land implies the duty of living on it, and by it, if there is enough to live on ; then, having got one's own life from it by one's own labour or wise superintendence of labour, if there is more land than is enough for one's self, the duty of making it fruitful and beautiful for as many more as can live on it.

The owner of land, necessarily and justly left in a great measure by the State to do what he will with his own, is nevertheless entirely responsible to the State for the generally beneficial management of his territory ; and the sale of his land, or of any portion of it, only allowed under special conditions, and with solemn public registry of the transference to another owner : above all, the landmarks by which estates are described are never to be moved.

A certain quantity of public land (some belonging to the king and signory, some to the guilds of craftsmen, some to the town or village corporations) must be set aside for public uses and pleasures, and especially for purposes of education, which, rightly comprehended, consists, half of it, in making children familiar with

natural objects, and the other half in teaching the practice of piety towards them (piety meaning kindness to living things, and orderly use of the lifeless).

And throughout the various passages referring to this subject in 'Fors,' it will be found that I always presuppose a certain quantity of carefully tended land to be accessible near our schools and universities, not for exercise merely, but for instruction;—see last 'Fors,' p. 239.

Of course, schools of this kind cannot be in large towns,—the town school must be for townspeople; but I start with the general principle that every school is to be fitted for the children in its neighbourhood who are likely to grow up and live in its neighbourhood. The idea of a general education which is to fit everybody to be Emperor of Russia, and provoke a boy, whatever he is, to want to be something better, and wherever he was born to think it a disgrace to die, is the most entirely and directly diabolic of all the countless stupidities into which the British nation has been of late betrayed by its avarice and irreligion. There are, indeed, certain elements of education which are alike necessary to the inhabitants of every spot of earth. Cleanliness, obedience, the first laws of music, mechanics, and geometry, the primary facts of geography and astronomy, and the outlines of history, should evidently be taught alike to poor and rich, to sailor and shepherd, to labourer and shopboy. But for the rest, the efficiency of any school will be found to

increase exactly in the ratio of its direct adaptation to the circumstances of the children it receives ; and the quantity of knowledge to be attained in a given time being equal, its value will depend on the possibilities of its instant application. You need not teach botany to the sons of fishermen, architecture to shepherds, or painting to colliers ; still less the elegances of grammar to children who throughout the probable course of their total lives will have, or ought to have, little to say, and nothing to write.\*

Farther, of schools in all places, and for all ages, the healthy working will depend on the total exclusion of the stimulus of competition in any form or disguise. Every child should be measured by its own standard, trained to its own duty, and rewarded by its just praise. It is the *effort* that deserves praise, not the success ; nor is it a question for any student whether he is cleverer than others or duller, but whether he has done the best he could with the gifts he has. The madness of the modern cram and examination system arises principally out of the struggle to get lucrative places ; but partly also out of the radical blockheadism of supposing that all men are naturally equal, and can only make their

\* I am at total issue with most preceptors as to the use of grammar to *any* body. In a recent examination of our Coniston school I observed that the thing the children did exactly best, was their parsing, and the thing they did exactly worst, their repetition. Could stronger proof be given that the dissection of a sentence is as bad a way to the understanding of it as the dissection of a beast to the biography of it?

way by elbowing;—the facts being that every child is born with an accurately defined and absolutely limited capacity; that he is naturally (if able at all) able for some things and unable for others; that no effort and no teaching can add one particle to the granted ounces of his available brains; that by competition he may paralyse or pervert his faculties, but cannot stretch them a line; and that the entire grace, happiness, and virtue of his life depend on his contentment in doing what he can, dutifully, and in staying where he is, peaceably. So far as he regards the less or more capacity of others, his superiorities are to be used for *their* help, not for his own pre-eminence; and his inferiorities to be no ground of mortification, but of pleasure in the admiration of nobler powers. It is impossible to express the quantity of delight I used to feel in the power of Turner and Tintoret, when my own skill was nascent only; and all good artists will admit that there is far less personal pleasure in doing a thing beautifully than in seeing it beautifully done. Therefore, over the door of every school, and the gate of every college, I would fain see engraved in their marble the absolute Forbidding

μηδὲν κατὰ ἐρίθειαν η̄ κενοδοξίαν :

"Let *nothing* be done through strife or vain glory:"

and I would have fixed for each age of children and students a certain standard of pass in examination, so

adapted to average capacity and power of exertion, that none need fail who had attended to their lessons and obeyed their masters ; while its variety of trial should yet admit of the natural distinctions attaching to progress in especial subjects and skill in peculiar arts. Beyond such indication or acknowledgment of merit, there should be neither prizes nor honours ; these are meant by Heaven to be the proper rewards of a man's consistent and kindly life, not of a youth's temporary and selfish exertion.

Nor, on the other hand, should the natural torpor of wholesome dulness be disturbed by provocations, or plagued by punishments. The wise proverb ought in every schoolmaster's mind to be deeply set—" You cannot make a silk purse of a sow's ear ;" expanded with the farther scholium that the flap of it will not be the least disguised by giving it a diamond earring. If, in a woman, beauty without discretion be as a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, much more, in man, woman, or child, knowledge without discretion—the knowledge which a fool receives only to puff up his stomach, and sparkle in his cockscomb. As I said,\* that in matters moral, most men are not intended to be any better than sheep and robins, so, in matters intellectual, most men are not intended to be any wiser than their cocks and bulls,—duly scientific of their yard and pasture, peacefully nescient of all beyond. To be proud and

\* Notes on the life of Santa Zita (' Songs of Tuscany,' Part II.).

strong, each in his place and work, is permitted and ordained to the simplest; but ultra,—ne sutor, ne fossor.

And it is in the wholesome indisposition of the average mind for intellectual labour that due provision is made for the quantity of dull work which must be done in stubbing the Thornaby wastes of the world. Modern Utopianism imagines that the world is to be stubbed by steam, and human arms and legs to be eternally idle; not perceiving that thus it would reduce man to the level of his cattle indeed, who can only graze and gore, but not dig! It is indeed certain that advancing knowledge will guide us to less painful methods of human toil; but in the true Utopia, man will rather harness himself, with his oxen, to his plough, than leave the devil to drive it.

The entire body of teaching throughout the series of '*Fors Clavigera*' is one steady assertion of the necessity that educated persons should share their thoughts with the uneducated, and take also a certain part in their labours. But there is not a sentence implying that the education of all should be alike, or that there is to be no distinction of master from servant, or of scholar from clown. That education should be open to all, is as certain as that the sky should be; but, as certainly, it should be enforced on none, and benevolent Nature left to lead her children, whether men or beasts, to take or leave at their pleasure. Bring horse and man to the water, let them drink if, and when, they will;—the

child who desires education will be bettered by it, the child who dislikes it, only disgraced.

Of course, I am speaking here of intellectual education, not moral. The laws of virtue and honour are, indeed, to be taught compulsorily to all men ; whereas our present forms of education refuse to teach them to any ; and allow the teaching, by the persons interested in their promulgation, of the laws of cruelty and lying, until we find these British islands gradually filling with a breed of men who cheat without shame, and kill without remorse.

It is beyond the scope of the most sanguine thought to conceive how much misery and crime would be effaced from the world by persistence, even for a few years, of a system of education thus directed to raise the fittest into positions of influence, to give to every scale of intellect its natural sphere, and to every line of action its unquestioned principle. At present wise men, for the most part, are silent, and good men powerless ; the senseless vociferate, and the heartless govern ; while all social law and providence are dissolved by the enraged agitation of a multitude, among whom every villain has a chance of power, every simpleton of praise, and every scoundrel of fortune.

Passing now to questions of detail in the mode of organising school instruction, I would first insist on the necessity of a sound system in elementary music. Musicians, like painters, are almost virulently determined in their efforts to abolish the laws of sincerity and purity ;

and to invent, each for his own glory, new modes of dissolute and lascivious sound. No greater benefit could be conferred on the upper as well as the lower classes of society than the arrangement of a grammar of simple and pure music, of which the code should be alike taught in every school in the land. My attention has been long turned to this object, but I have never till lately had leisure to begin serious work upon it. During the last year, however, I have been making experiments with a view to the construction of an instrument by which very young children could be securely taught the relations of sound in the octave; unsuccessful only in that the form of lyre which was produced for me, after months of labour, by the British manufacturer, was as curious a creation of visible deformity as a Greek lyre was of grace, besides being nearly as expensive as a piano! For the present, therefore, not abandoning the hope of at last attaining a simple stringed instrument, I have fallen back—and I think, probably, with final good reason—on the most sacred of all musical instruments, the ‘Bell.’

Whether the cattle-bell of the hills, or, from the cathedral tower, monitor of men, I believe the sweetness of its prolonged tone the most delightful and wholesome for the ear and mind of all instrumental sound. The subject is too wide to be farther dwelt on here; of experiment or progress made, account will be given in my reports to the St. George’s Guild.

Next for elocution. The foundational importance of beautiful speaking has been disgraced by the confusion of it with diplomatic oratory, and evaded by the vicious notion that it can be taught by a master learned in it as a separate art. The management of the lips, tongue, and throat may, and perhaps should, be so taught ; but this is properly the first function of the singing master. Elocution is a moral faculty ; and no one is fit to be the head of a children's school who is not both by nature and attention a beautiful speaker.

By attention, I say, for fine elocution means first an exquisitely close attention to, and intelligence of, the meaning of words, and perfect sympathy with what feeling they describe ; but indicated always with reserve. In this reserve, fine reading and speaking, (virtually one art), differ from "recitation," which gives the statement or sentiment with the explanatory accent and gesture of an actor. In perfectly pure elocution, on the contrary, the accent ought, as a rule, to be much lighter and gentler than the natural or dramatic one, and the force of it wholly independent of gesture or expression of feature. A fine reader should read, a great speaker speak, as a judge delivers his charge ; and the test of his power should be to read or speak unseen.

At least an hour of the school-day should be spent in listening to the master's or some trustworthy visitor's reading, but no children should attend unless they were really interested ; the rest being allowed to go on with

their other lessons or employments; a large average of children, I suppose, are able to sew or draw while they yet attend to reading, and so there might be found a fairly large audience, of whom however those who were usually busy during the lecture should not be called upon for any account of what they had heard; but, on the contrary, blamed, if they had allowed their attention to be diverted by the reading from what they were about, to the detriment of their work. The real audience consisting of the few for whom the book had been specially chosen, should be required to give perfect and unbroken attention to what they heard; to stop the reader always at any word or sentence they did not understand, and to be prepared for casual examination on the story next day.

I say 'on the *story*,' for the reading, whether poetry or prose, should always be a story of some sort, whether true history, travels, romance, or fairy-tale. In poetry, Chaucer, Spenser, and Scott, for the upper classes, lighter ballad or fable for the lower, contain always some thread of pretty adventure. No merely didactic or descriptive books should be permitted in the reading room, but so far as they are used at all, studied in the same way as grammars; and Shakespeare, accessible always at play time in the library in small and large editions to the young and old alike, should never be used as a school book, nor even formally or continuously read aloud. He is to be known by thinking, not mouthing.

I have used, not unintentionally, the separate words 'reading room' and library. No school should be considered as organized at all, without these two rooms, rightly furnished ; the reading room, with its convenient pulpit and students' desks, in good light, skylight if possible, for drawing, or taking notes—the library with its broad tables for laying out books on, and recesses for niched reading, and plenty of lateral light kept carefully short of glare : both of them well shut off from the schoolroom or rooms, in which there must be always more or less of noise.

The Bible-reading, and often that of other books in which the text is divided into verses or stanzas, should be frequently conducted by making the children read each its separate verse in important passages, afterwards committing them to memory,—the pieces chosen for this exercise should of course be the same at all schools,—with wider scope given within certain limits for choice in profane literature : requiring for a pass, that the children should know accurately out of the passages chosen, a certain number, including not less than five hundred lines, of such poetry as would always be helpful and strengthening to them ; therefore never melancholy, but didactic, or expressive of cheerful and resolute feeling.

No discipline is of more use to a child's character, with threefold bearing on intellect, memory, and morals, than the being accustomed to relate accurately what it has lately done and seen. The story of Eyes and No Eyes

in 'Evenings at Home' is intended only to illustrate the difference between inattention and vigilance ; but the exercise in narration is a subsequent and separate one ; it is in the lucidity, completeness, and honesty of statement. Children ought to be frequently required to give account of themselves, though always allowed reserve, if they ask : "I would rather not say, mamma," should be accepted at once with serene confidence on occasion ; but of the daily walk and work the child should take pride in giving full account, if questioned ; the parent or tutor closely lopping exaggeration, investigating elision, guiding into order, and aiding in expression. The finest historical style may be illustrated in the course of the narration of the events of the day.

Next, as regards arithmetic : as partly stated already in the preceding 'Fors,' p. 233, children's time should never be wasted, nor their heads troubled with it. The importance at present attached to it is a mere filthy folly, coming of the notion that every boy is to become first a banker's clerk and then a banker,—and that every woman's principal business is in checking the cook's accounts. Let children have small incomes of pence won by due labour,—they will soon find out the difference between a threepenny-piece and a fourpenny, and how many of each go to a shilling. Then, watch the way they spend their money,\* and teach them patience in

\* Not in Mrs. Pardiggle's fashion : a child ought to have a certain sum given it to give away, and a certain sum to spend for itself wisely ; and it ought not

saving, and the sanctity of a time-honoured hoard (but for use in a day of need, not for lending at interest); so they will painlessly learn the great truth known to so few of us—that two and two make four, not five. Then insist on perfect habits of order and putting-by of things; this involves continually knowing and counting how many there are. The multiplication table may be learned when they want it—a longish addition sum will always do instead; and the mere mechanism of multiplication and division and dotting and carrying can be taught by the monitors; also of fractions, as much as that  $\frac{1}{2}$  means a half-penny and  $\frac{1}{4}$  a farthing.\*

Next for geography. There is, I suppose, no subject better taught at elementary schools; but to the pursuit of it, whether in advanced studentship or in common life, there is now an obstacle set so ludicrously insuperable, that for ordinary people it is simply an end to effort. I happen at this moment to have the first plate to finish for the 'Bible of Amiens,' giving an abstract of the features of France. I took for reduction, as of convenient size, probably containing all I wanted to reduce, the map in the 'Harrow Atlas of Modern Geography,' and found the

to be allowed to give away its spending money. Prudence is a much more rare virtue than generosity.

\* I heard an advanced class tormented out of its life the other day at our school to explain the difference between a numerator and denominator. I wasn't sure myself, for the minute, which was which; and supremely didn't care.

only clearly visible and the only accurately delineated things in it, were the railroads! To begin with, there are two Mont Blancs, of which the freeborn British boy may take his choice. Written at some distance from the biggest of them, in small italics, are the words "Grand St. Bernard," which the boy cannot but suppose to refer to some distant locality; but neither of the Mont Blancs, each represented as a circular pimple, is engraved with anything like the force and shade of the Argonne hills about Bar le Duc; while the southern chain of the hills of Burgundy is similarly represented as greatly more elevated than the Jura. Neither the Rhine, Rhone, Loire, nor Seine is visible except with a lens; nor is any boundary of province to be followed by the eye; patches of feeble yellow and pale brown, dirty pink and grey, and uncertain green, melt into each other helplessly across wrigglings of infinitesimal dots; while the railways, not merely black lines, but centipede or myriapede caterpillars, break up all France, as if it were crackling clay, into senseless and shapeless divisions, in which the eye cannot distinguish from the rest even the great lines of railway themselves, nor any relative magnitudes of towns, nor even their places accurately,—the measure of nonsense and misery being filled up by a mist of multitudinous names of places never heard of, much less spoken of, by any human being ten miles out of them.

For maps of this kind, there can be no question with any reasonable human creature that, first, proper physical maps should be substituted ; and secondly, proper historical ones ; the diagrams of the railways being left to Bradshaw ; and the fungus growths of modern commercial towns to the sellers of maps for counting-houses. And the Geological Society should, for pure shame, neither write nor speak another word, till it has produced effectively true models to scale of the known countries of the world. These, photographed in good side light, would give all that was necessary of the proportion and distribution of mountain ranges ;\* and these photographs should afterwards be made the basis of beautiful engravings, giving the character of every district completely, whether arable, wooded, rocky, moor, sand, or snow, with the carefullest and clearest tracing of the sources and descent of its rivers ; and, in equally careful distinction of magnitude, as stars on the celestial globe, the capitals and great provincial towns ; but absolutely without names or inscriptions of any kind. The boy who cannot, except by the help of inscription, know York from Lancaster, or Rheims from Dijon, or Rome from Venice, need not be troubled to pursue his geographical studies.

\* Of the cheap barbarisms and abortions of modern cram, the frightful method of representing mountain chains by black bars is about the most ludicrous and abominable. All mountain chains are in groups, not bars, and their watersheds are often entirely removed from their points of greatest elevation.

The keys to every map, with the names, should form part of the elementary school geography, which should be the same over the whole British Empire, and should be extremely simple and brief; concerning itself in no wise with manners and customs, number of inhabitants, or species of beasts, but strictly with geographical fact, completed by so much intelligible geology, as should explain whether hills were of chalk, slate, or granite, and remain mercifully silent as to whether they were Palæo- or Kaino-zoic, Permian or Silurian. The age, or ages of the world, are not of the smallest consequence either to ants or myrmidons,—either to moths or men. But the ant and man must know where the world, now existent, is soft or flinty, cultivable or quarriable.

Of course, once a system of drawing rightly made universal, the hand-colouring of these maps would be one of the drawing exercises, absolutely costless, and entirely instructive. The historical maps should also, as a matter of course, be of every county in successive centuries;—the state of things in the nineteenth century being finally simplified into a general brown fog, intensified to blackness over the manufacturing centres.

Next, in astronomy, the beginning of all is to teach the child the places and names of the stars when it can see them, and to accustom it to watch for the nightly change of those visible. The register of the

visible stars of first magnitude and planets should be printed largely and intelligibly for every day of the year, and set by the schoolmaster every day ; and the arc described by the sun, with its following and preceding stars, from point to point of the horizon visible at the place, should be drawn, at least weekly, as the first of the drawing exercises.

These, connected on one side with geometry, on the other with writing, should be carried at least as far, and occupy as long a time, as the exercises in music ; and the relations of the two arts, and meaning of the words ‘composition,’ ‘symmetry,’ ‘grace,’ and ‘harmony’ in both, should be very early insisted upon and illustrated. For all these purposes, every school should be furnished with progressive examples, in facsimile, of beautiful illuminated writing : for nothing could be more conducive to the progress of general scholarship and taste than that the first natural instincts of clever children for the imitation or, often, the invention of picture writing, should be guided and stimulated by perfect models in their own kind.

The woodcut prefixed to this number shows very curiously what complete harmony there is between a clever child’s way of teaching itself to draw and write—(and no teaching is so good for it as its own, if that can be had)—and the earliest types of beautiful national writing. The indifference as to the places of the letters, or the direction in which they are to be read, and the

insertion of any that are to spare for the filling of corners or otherwise blank spaces in the picture, are exactly the modes of early writing which afterwards give rise to its most beautiful decorative arrangements—a certain delight in the dignity of enigma being always at the base of this method of ornamentation. The drawing is by the same little girl whose anxiety that her doll's dress might not hurt its feelings has been already described in my second lecture at Oxford, on the Art of England. This fresco, executed nearly at the same time, when she was six or seven years old, may be compared by antiquarians, not without interest, with early Lombardic MSS. It needs, I think, no farther elucidation than some notice of the difficulty caused by the substitution of **T** for **J** in the title of 'The Jug,' and the reversal of the letter **Z** in that of 'The Zebra,' and warning not to mistake the final **E** of 'The Cake' for the handle of a spotted tea-cup. The most beautifully Lombardic involution is that of "The Fan," written—

T N H  
E A F

Next, for zoology, I am taking the initiative in what is required myself, by directing some part of the funds of the St. George's Guild to the provision of strongly ringed frames, large enough to contain the beautiful illustrations given by Gould, Audubon, and other such

naturalists ; and I am cutting my best books to pieces for the filling of these frames, which can be easily passed from school to school ; and I hope to prepare with speed a general text for them, totally incognisant of all quarrel or inquiry concerning species, and the origin thereof ; but simply calling a hawk a hawk, and an owl an owl ; and trusting to the scholars' sagacity to see the difference ; but giving him all attainable information concerning the habits and talents of every bird and beast.

Similarly in botany, for which there are quite unlimited means of illustration, in the exquisite original drawings and sketches of great botanists, now uselessly lying in inaccessible cupboards of the British Museum and other scientific institutions. But the most pressing need is for a simple handbook of the wild flowers of every country—French flowers for French children, Teuton for Teuton, Saxon for Saxon, Highland for Scot—severely accurate in outline, and exquisitely coloured by hand (again the best possible practice in our drawing schools) ; with a text regardless utterly of any but the most popular names, and of all microscopic observation ; but teaching children the beauty of plants as they grow, and their culinary uses when gathered, and that, except for such uses, they should be left growing.

And lastly of needlework. I find among the materials of 'Fors,' thrown together long since, but never used, the following sketch of what the room of the Sheffield

Museum, set apart for its illustration, was meant to contain.

"All the acicular art of nations, savage and civilized—from Lapland boot, letting in no snow water, to Turkey cushion bossed with pearl,—to valance of Venice gold in needlework,—to the counterpanes and samplers of our own lovely ancestresses—imitable, perhaps, once more, with good help from Whitelands College and Girton. It was but yesterday my own womankind were in much wholesome and sweet excitement, delightful to behold, in the practice of some new device of remedy for Rents (to think how much of evil there is in the two senses of that four-lettered word! in the two methods of intonation of its synonym, Tear!), whereby it might be daintily effaced, and with a newness which would never make it worse. The process began—beautiful even to my uninformed eyes—in the likeness of herringbone masonry, crimson on white, but it seemed to me marvellous that anything should yet be discoverable in needle process, and that of so utilitarian character.

"All that is reasonable, I say, of such work is to be in our first Museum room; all that Athena and Penelope would approve. Nothing that vanity has invented for change, or folly loved for costliness.

"Illustrating the true nature of a thread and a needle, the structure first of wool and cotton, of fur and hair and down, hemp, flax, and silk, microscope permissible,

*here*, if anything can be shown of *why* wool is soft, and fur fine, and cotton downy, and down downier; and how a flax fibre differs from a dandelion stalk, and how the substance of a mulberry leaf can become velvet for Queen Victoria's crown, and clothing of purple for the housewife of Solomon.

“Then the phase of its dyeing. What azures and emeralds and Tyrian scarlets can be got into fibres of thread!

“Then the phase of its spinning. The mystery of that divine spiral, from finest to firmest, which renders lace possible at Valenciennes; — anchorage possible, after Trafalgar, (if Hardy had done as he was bid).

“Then the mystery of weaving. The eternal harmony of warp and woof; of all manner of knotting, knitting, and reticulation; the art which makes garments possible woven from the top throughout; draughts of fishes possible, miraculous enough, always, when a pilchard or herring shoal gathers itself into companionable catchableness;—which makes, in fine, so many nations possible, and Saxon and Norman beyond the rest.

“And, finally, the accomplished phase of needlework—the ‘Acu Tetigisti’ of all time, which does indeed practically exhibit—what mediæval theologists vainly disputed—how many angels can stand on a needle point, directing the serviceable stitch, to draw the separate into the inseparable.”

Very thankfully I can now say that this vision of

thread and needlework, though written when my fancy had too much possession of me, is now being in all its branches realized by two greatly valued friends,—the spinning on the old spinning-wheel, with most happy and increasingly acknowledged results, systematized here among our Westmorland hills by Mr. Albert Fleming; the useful sewing, by Miss Stanley of Whitelands College, whose book on that subject seems to me in the text of it all that can be desired, but the diagrams of dress may perhaps receive further consideration. For indeed the schools of all young womankind are in great need of such instruction in dressmaking as shall comply with womankind's natural instinct for self-decoration in all worthy and graceful ways, repressing in the rich their ostentation, and encouraging in the poor their wholesome pride. On which matters, vital to the comfort and happiness of every household, I may have a word or two yet to say in next 'Fors,' being content that this one should close with the subjoined extract from a letter I received lately from Francesca's mother, who, if any one, has right to be heard on the subject of education; and the rather that it is, in main purport, contrary to much that I have both believed and taught, but, falling in more genially with the temper of recent tutors and governors, may by them be gratefully acted upon, and serve also for correction of what I may have myself too servilely thought respecting the need of compulsion.

"If I have the least faculty for anything in this world, it is for teaching children, and making them good and *perfectly happy* going along. My whole principle is that no government is of the least use except self-government, and the worst children will do right, if told which is right and wrong, and that they must act for themselves. Then I have a fashion, told me by a friend when Francesca was a baby; which is this, —*never see evil, but praise good*; for instance, if children are untidy, do not find fault, or appear to notice it, but the first time possible, praise them for being neat and fresh, and they will soon become so. I dare say you can account for this, I cannot; but I have tried it many times, and have never known it fail. I have other ideas, but you might not approve of them,—the religious instruction I limited to paying my little friends for learning Dr. Watts' "Though I'm now in younger days," but I suppose *that*, like my system generally, is hopelessly old fashioned. Very young children can learn this verse from it :—

"I'll not willingly offend,  
Nor be easily offended;  
What's amiss I'll strive to mend,  
And endure what can't be mended."

There was an old American sea captain who said he had been many times round the world comfortably by the help of this verse."

The following letters necessitate the return to my old form of notes and correspondence; but as I intend now the close of 'Fors' altogether, that I may have leisure for some brief autobiography instead, the old book may be permitted to retain its colloquial character to the end.

"Woodburn, Selkirk, N.B., 11th December, 1883.

"DEAR SIR,—The Ashesteil number of 'Fors' reaches me as I complete certain notes on the relationship of Scott to Mungo Park, which will form part of a History of Ettrick Forest, which I hope to publish in 1884. This much in explanation of my presumption in writing you at all.

"Having now had all the use of them I mean to take, I send you copies of three letters taken by myself from the originals—and never published until last year, in an obscure local print:—

"1. Letter from Mungo Park to his sister. 2. Letter from Scott to Mrs. Laidlaw, of Peel (close to Ashesteil), written after the bankruptcy of a lawyer brother of the African traveller had involved his entire family circle in ruin. The 'merry friend' is Archibald Park, brother of Mungo (see 'Lockhart,' ch. xiii.) It is he Sir Walter refers to in his story about the hot hounds entering Loch Katrine (see Introd. 'Lady of Lake.') 3. Letter to young Mungo Park, on the death of his father, the above Archibald.

"I send you these because I know the perusal of letter No. 2 will give you deep pleasure, and I owe you much. Nothing in Sir Walter's career ever touched me more.

"May I venture a word for Mungo Park? He brought my wife's aunt into this world in the course of his professional practice at Peebles; and I have heard about his work there. He was one of the most devoted, unselfish men that stood for Scott's hero—Gideon Gray. Apropos of which, a story. Park, lost on the

moors one wild night in winter, directed his horse to a distant light, which turned out to be the candle of a hill-shepherd's cottage. It so happened that the doctor arrived there in the nick of time, for the shepherd's wife was on the point of confinement. He waited till all was well over, and next morning the shepherd escorted him to where he could see the distant road. Park, noticing the shepherd lag behind, asked him the reason, on which the simple man replied—'Deed sir, my wife said she was sure you must be an angel, and I think sa tae ; so I'm just keeping ahint, to be sure I'll see you flee up.' This I have from the nephew of Park's wife, himself a worthy old doctor and ex-provost of Selkirk. The first motive of Park's second journey may have been fame ; I am disposed to think it was. But I am sure if *auri fames* had anything to do with it, it was for his wife and children that he wanted it. Read his letters home, as I have done, and you will concede to the ill-fated man a character higher than last 'Fors' accords him.

"If you place any value on these letters, may I venture to ask you to discharge the debt by a copy of last *F. C.* with your autograph ? I am not ashamed to say I ask it in a spirit of blind worship.

"I shall not vex you by writing for your own eyes how much I honour and respect you ; but shall content myself with professing myself your obedient servant,

"T. CRAIG-BROWN."

8th May, 1881.

COPY of letters lent to me by Mr. Blaikie, Holydean, and taken by him from boxes belonging to late Miss Jane Park, niece of Mungo Park.

1. Original letter from Mungo Park to his sister, Miss Bell Park, Hartwoodmires, near Selkirk. "Dear Sister,—I have not heard from Scotland since I left it, but I hope you are

all in good health, and I attribute your silence to the hurry of harvest. However, let me hear from you soon, and write how Sandy's marriage comes on, and how Jeany is, for I have heard nothing from her neither. I have nothing new to tell you. I am very busy preparing my book for the press, and all friends here are in good health. Mr. Dickson is running about, sometimes in the shop and sometimes out of it. Peggy is in very good health, and dressed as I think in a cotton gown of a bluish pattern; a *round-eared much*, (sic,—properly mutch,) or what they call here a cap, with a white ribbon; a Napkin of lawn or muslin, or some such thing; a white striped dimity petticoat. Euphy and bill (Bell or Bill?) are both in very good health, but they are gone out to play, therefore I must defer a description of them till my next letter.—I remain, your loving brother, MUNGO PARK.—London, Sept. 21st, 1795. P.S.—Both Peggy and Mr. Dickson have been very inquisitive about you and beg their compliments to you."

2. (Copy.) Letter from (Sir) Walter Scott to Mrs. Laidlaw, of Peel. (See 'Lockhart's Life,' chap. xvii., p. 164.) "My dear Mrs. Laidlaw,—Any remembrance from you is at all times most welcome to me. I have, in fact, been thinking a good deal about Mr. Park, especially about my good merry friend Archie, upon whom such calamity has fallen. I will write to a friend in London likely to know about such matters to see if possible to procure him the situation of an overseer of extensive farms in improvements, for which he is so well qualified. But success in this is doubtful, and I am aware that their distress must be pressing. Now, Waterloo has paid, or is likely to pay me a great deal more money than I think proper to subscribe for the fund for families suffering, and I chiefly consider the surplus as dedicated to assist distress or affliction. I shall receive my letter in a few days from the booksellers, and I will send Mr. Laidlaw care for £50 and three months, the contents to be applied to the service of Mr. Park's family. It is no great

sum, but may serve to alleviate any immediate distress; and you can apply it as coming from yourself, which will relieve Park's delicacy upon the subject. I really think I will be able to hear of something for him; at least it shall not be for want of asking about, for I will lug him in as a postscript to every letter I write. Will you tell Mr. Laidlaw with my best compliments—not that I have bought KAESIDE, for this James will have told him already, but that I have every reason to think I have got it £600 cheaper than I would at a public sale? Mrs. Scott and the young people join in best compliments, and I ever am, dear Mrs. Laidlaw, very truly yours, WALTER SCOTT.—Edinburgh, 20th Nov. (1815)."

3. Letter (original) from Sir Walter Scott to Mr. Mungo Park, Tobermory, Isle of Mull, Oban. "Sir,—I was favoured with your very attentive letter conveying to me the melancholy intelligence that you have lost my old acquaintance and friend, your worthy father. I was using some interest to get him placed on the Superannuated Establishment of the Customs, but God has been pleased to render this unnecessary. A great charge devolves on you, sir, for so young a person, both for the comfort and support of his family. If you let me know your plans of life when settled, it is possible I may be of use to you in some shape or other, which I should desire in the circumstances, though my powers are very limited unless in the way of recommendation. I beg my sincere condolence may be communicated to your sister, who I understand to be a very affectionate daughter and estimable young person. I remain very much your obedient servant, WALTER SCOTT.—Edinburgh, 17th May, 1820."

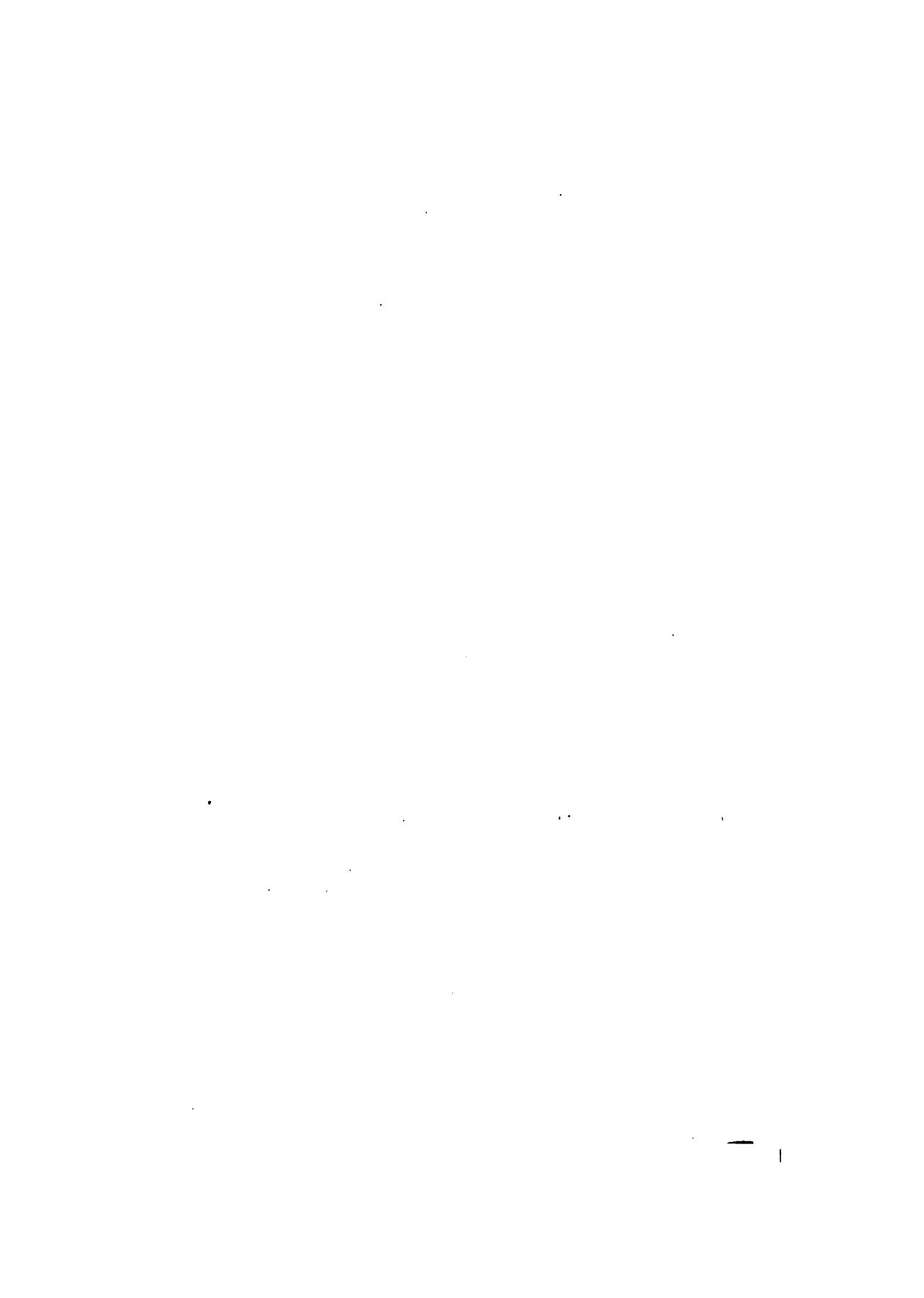
I am greatly obliged to Mr. Brown for his own letter, and for those which I have printed above; but have only to answer that no "word for Mungo Park" was the least necessary in reply to what I said of him, nor could *any* word in reply lessen its force, as far as it

goes. I spoke of him as the much regretted friend of Sir Walter Scott, and as a man most useful in his appointed place of a country physician. How useful, and honoured, and blessed that function was, nothing could prove more clearly than the beautiful fact of the shepherd's following him as an angel; and nothing enforce more strongly my blame of his quitting that angel's work by Tweedside to trace the lonely banks of useless rivers. The letter to his sister merely lowers my estimate of his general culture; a common servant's letter home is usually more interesting, and not worse spelt. A 'sacred' one to his wife, published lately by a rabid Scot in reply to the serene sentences of mine, which he imagines 'explosive' like his own, need not be profaned by 'Fors' print. I write letters with more feeling in them to most of my good girl-friends, any day of the year, and don't run away from them to Africa afterwards.

A letter from Miss Russell to the *Scotsman*, written soon after last 'Fors' was published, to inform Scotland that Ashesteil was not a farm house,—(it would all, with the latest additions, go inside a Bernese farmer's granary)—that nobody it belonged to had ever done any farming, or anything else that was useful,—that Scott had been greatly honoured in being allowed a lease of it, that his study had been turned into a passage in the recent improvements, and that in the dining-room of it, Mrs. Siddons had called for beer,

may also be left to the reverential reading of the subscribers to the *Scotsman*;—with this only question, from me, to the citizens of Dun Edin, What good is their pinnacle in Prince's Street, when they have forgotten where the room was, and corridor is, in which Scott wrote ‘Marmion’?











# FORS CLAVIGERA.

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## LETTERS

*TO THE WORKMEN AND LABOURERS  
OF GREAT BRITAIN.*

By JOHN RUSKIN, LL.D.

**LETTER THE 96th (TERMINAL).**

(TWELFTH OF NEW SERIES.)

CHRISTMAS, 1884.

**ROSY VALE.**



GEORGE ALLEN,  
SUNNYSIDE, ORPINGTON, KENT.



## FORS CLAVIGERA.

*SECOND SERIES.*

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"YEA, THE WORK OF OUR HANDS, ESTABLISH THOU IT."

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**LETTER THE 96th. (TERMINAL.)**

**ROSY VALE.**

"**S**T. DAVID, having built a monastery near Meneira, which is from him since called St. David's, in a place called the Rosy Valley, (Vallis Rosina,) gave this strict rule of monastical profession,—'That every monk should labour daily with his hands for the common good of the Monastery, according to the Apostle's saying, He that doth not labour, let him not eat. For those who spend their time in idleness debase their minds, which become unstable, and bring forth impure thoughts, which restlessly disquiet them.' The monks there *refused all gifts or possessions offered by unjust men*; *they detested riches*; they had no care to ease their labour by the use of oxen or other cattle, for every one was instead of riches and oxen to himself and his brethren. They never conversed together by talking but when necessity required, but each one performed the labour enjoined him, joining thereto prayer,

or holy meditations on Divine things: and having finished their country work, they returned to their monastery, where they spent the remainder of the day, till the evening, in reading or writing. In the evening, at the sounding of a bell, they all left their work and immediately repaired to the church, where they remained till the stars appeared, and then went all together to their refection, eating sparingly and not to satiety, for any excess in eating, though it be only of bread, occasions luxury. Their food was bread with roots or herbs, seasoned with salt, and their thirst they quenched with a mixture of water and milk. Supper being ended, they continued about three hours in watching, prayers, and genuflexions. After this they went to rest, and at cock-crowing they arose again, and continued at prayer till day appeared. All their inward temptations and thoughts they discovered to their superior. Their clothing was of the skins of beasts. Whosoever desired to be admitted into their holy convocation was obliged to remain ten days at the door of the monastery as an offcast, unworthy to be admitted into their society, and there he was exposed to be scorned; but if, during that time, he patiently endured that mortification, he was received by the religious senior who had charge of the gate, whom he served, and was by him instructed. In that condition he continued a long time, exercised in painful labours, and grievous mortifications, and at last was admitted to the fellowship of the brethren.

"This monastery appears to have been founded by St. David, some time after the famous British synod assembled in the year 519, for crushing of the Pelagian heresy, which began again to spread after it had been once before extinguished by St. Germanus, Bishop of Auxerre, and St. Lupus, Bishop of Troyes. This monastery is not taken notice of in the *Monasticon*, any more than the other two above, and for the same reason, as not coming within any of the orders afterwards known in England, and having had but a short continuance ; for what became of it, or when it finished, is not known."

I chanced on this passage in the second volume of Dugdale's '*Monasticon*', as I was choosing editions of it at Mr. Quaritch's, on one of the curious days which I suppose most people recognize as 'white' among the many-coloured ones of their lives ; that is to say, the days when everything goes well, by no management of their own. About the same time I received the following letter from a very old and dear friend :—

"In an old '*Fors*' you ask for information about Nanterre. If you have not had it already, here is some. As you know, it is in the plain between Paris, Sèvres, and Versailles—a station on the Versailles line ; a little station, at which few persons 'descend,' and fewer still ascend ; the ladies of the still somewhat primitive and rather ugly little village being

chiefly laundresses, and preferring, as I should in their place, to go to Paris in their own carts with the clean linen. Nanterre has, however, two notable transactions in its community. It makes cakes, sold in Paris as ‘Gâteaux de Nanterre,’ and dear to childhood’s soul. *And—now prick up your ears—it yearly elects a Rosière.* Not a high-falutin’ æsthetic, self-conscious product, forced, and in an unsuitable sphere; but a *real* Rosière—a peasant girl, not chosen for beauty, or reading or writing, neither of which she may possibly possess; but one who has in some signal, but simple, *unself-conscious* way done her duty in the state of life unto which it has pleased God to call her,—done it in the open, fresh air, and under the bright sun, in the ‘fierce white light’ of village public opinion; who is known to young and old, and has been known all her life.

“She is crowned with roses in May, and has a portion of rather more than 1,000 francs. She is expected soon to marry, and carry on into the higher functions of wife and mother the promise of her maidenhood.”

And with this letter came another, from Francesca, giving me this following account of her servant Edwige’s\* native village.

“I have been asking her about ‘Le Rose;’ she says it is *such* a pretty place, and the road has a hedge of

\* See ‘Roadside Songs of Tuscany,’ No. II., p. 80.

beautiful roses on each side, and there are roses about all the houses. . . . . But now I can hardly finish my letter, for since she has begun she cannot stop running on about her birthplace, and I am writing in the midst of a long discourse about the chestnut-trees, and the high wooded hill, with the chapel of the Madonna at its summit, and the stream of clear water where she used to wash clothes, and I know not what else! She has a very affectionate recollection of her childhood, poor as it was; and I do think that the beautiful country in which she grew up gave a sort of brightness to her life. I am very thankful that her story is going to be printed, for it has been a help to me, and will be, I think, to others."

Yes, a help, and better than that, a light,—as also this that follows, being an account just sent me by Francesca, of a Rosy Vale in Italy, rejoicing round its Living Rose.

#### THE MOTHER OF THE ORPHANS.

"In the beautiful city of Bassano, on the Brenta, between the mountains and the plain, Signora Maria Zanchetta has passed the eighty-five years of her busy, happy, and useful life, bringing a blessing to all who have come near her, first in her own family, and afterwards, for the last forty-five years, to one generation after another of poor orphan girls, to whom she has been more than a mother. She always had, from childhood, as she herself

told me, a wish to enter a religious life, and her vocation seems to have been rather for the active than for the contemplative side of such a life. She belongs to an honourable family of Bassano, and appears to have had an especial love and reverence for her parents, whom she would never leave as long as they lived. After their death she continued to live with an invalid sister, Paola, whom she remembers always with great tenderness, and who is spoken of still, by those who knew her, as something very near a saint.

"I have often wondered how much of Signora Maria's sweet and beautiful Christian spirit, which has brought comfort into hundreds of lives, may be owing to the influence of the saintly elder sister, whose helpless condition must have made her seem, to herself and others, comparatively useless in the world, but who lived always so very near to heaven! After Paola died, Maria, being no longer needed at home, resolved to give herself entirely to some charitable work, and her mind turned to the Girls' Orphan Asylum, close to her own house. Her brother and other relations would have preferred that she should have become a nun in one of those convents where girls of noble families are sent for education, considering that such a life was more honourable,\* and better suited to her condition. She told me this part of her

\* Let me earnestly pray the descendants of old Catholic families to think how constantly their pride, the primary mortal sin, has been the ruin of all they had most confidently founded it on, and all they strove to build on such foundation.

story herself, and added, ‘In the convent I should have been paid for my work, but I wanted to serve the Lord without recompense in this world, and so I came here to the orphans.’ There she has lived ever since, *wearing the same dress as the poor girls*,\* living their life, entering into all their pleasures, and troubles ; overseeing the washing, giving a hand to the mending, leading a humble, laborious life, full, one would think, of wearisome cares and burdens. A mother’s burdens, without a mother’s instinct to support them ; but still, if one may judge by her face, she has lived in perpetual sunshine. And how young she looks still ! She must have been a delicate blonde beauty in her youth, and she still retains a complexion like a sweet-briar rose, and her kind blue eyes are as clear and peaceful as an infant’s. Her hair, still abundant as in youth, is quite white, and yet not like snow, unless it be snow with the evening sunshine upon it ; one sees in a moment that it has once been golden, and it is finer than anything that I ever saw, excepting thistledown. Her dress is of the poorest and plainest, and yet I cannot feel that she would be more beautiful in any other. A blue cotton dress, and cap of the same, with a handkerchief and

\* The good Superiora’s example, comparing what we are told of the dress of the girls themselves at page 301, may well take the place of all I had to say in this last *Fors*, about dress, summed in the simple advice to all women of rank and wealth,—Till you can dress your poor beautifully, dress *yourselves* plainly ; till you can feed all your poor healthily, live yourselves like the monks of Vallis Rosina, and the message of *Fors* is ended.

apron, such as are worn by the contadine, nothing else ; but all arranged with scrupulous neatness. There is nothing monastic in the dress, nor in the life. Signora Maria is free to stay or go as she will ; she is bound by no vow, belongs to no order ; there has been nothing but the love of God, and of the poor children, to hold her to her place all these long years. She has some property, but she leaves the use of it to her family, taking for herself only just what is sufficient for her own maintenance in the asylum, that she may not take anything from the orphans. I had long wished to know this good Signora Maria, and finally, last May, I had the great pleasure of seeing her. I had sent to ask at what hour she could see me, to which she replied, ‘Any time after six in the morning,’ which I thought was pretty well for eighty-five !

“ When, the next morning, I went with Edwige to the orphan asylum, and we entered the very modest little bottega, as they call it, with its low ceiling and counter, where they sell artificial flowers, and certain simple medicines of their own preparing, in which the Bassano people have great faith ; and where also they receive orders for ornamental laundry-work, and for embroidery of a religious description,\*—when, as I was saying, we entered this room, half-a-dozen elderly women were standing talking together, all in the same old-fashioned

\* I should be inclined considerably to modify these directions of industry, in the organization of similar institutions here.

blue dresses. I asked if I could see the superiora, at which this very pretty and young-looking lady came forward; and I, not dreaming that she could be the aged saint for whom I was looking, repeated my question. ‘A servirla!’ she replied. I was obliged to explain the astonishment, which I could not conceal, by saying, that I had expected to see a much older lady. ‘I *am* old,’ she answered, ‘but I have good health, thank the Lord!’ And then she led us through the room where a number of girls were doing the peculiar laundry-work of which I have spoken,—one cannot call it ironing, *for no iron is used about it* ;\* but with their fingers, and a fine stick kept for the purpose, they work the starched linen into all kinds of delicate patterns. They all rose and bowed politely as we passed, and then the old lady preceded us up the stone staircase (which she mounted so rapidly that she left us some way behind her), and conducted us to a pleasant upper chamber, where we all sat down together. On this day, and on those following when I was taking her portrait, I gathered many particulars of her own life, and also about the institution, which I must write down one by one as I can remember them, for I find it impossible to arrange them in any order. She told me that they were in all seventy-five, between women and

\* I italicize here and there a sentence that might otherwise escape notice. I might italicize the whole text, if I could so express my sympathy with all it relates.

girls. Every girl taken into the institution has a right to a home in it for life, if she will ; and many never choose to leave it, or if they do leave it they return to it ; but others have married, or gone to service, or to live with their relations. Once, many years ago, she had seven little slave girls, put temporarily under her care by a good missionary who had bought them in Africa. She seems to have a peculiar tenderness in her remembrance of the poor little unbaptized savages. ‘The others call me Superiora,’ she said, ‘but *they* used to call me Mamma Maria.’ And her voice softened to more than its usual gentleness as she said those words.

“And now I must leave the dear old lady for a moment, to repeat what Silvia told me once about those same little slave girls. It was a warm summer’s evening, and Silvia and I were sitting, as we often do, on the broad stone steps of the Rezzonico Palace, between the two immense old stone lions that guard the door ; and watching the sunset behind the mountains. And Silvia was telling me how, when she was a very small child, those little African girls were brought to the house, and what wild black faces they had, and what brilliant eyes. As they were running about the wide lawn behind Palazzo Rezzonico (which stands in a retired country place about a mile from the city), they caught sight of those stone lions by the door, and immediately pressed about them, and fell to embracing them, as if they had been dear

friends, and covered them with tears and kisses ;\* and Silvia thought that they were thinking of their own country, and perhaps of lions which they had seen in their African deserts. I asked Signora Maria if she knew what had become of those poor girls. She said that she had heard that two of them afterwards entered a convent ; but she had lost sight of them all for many years ; and, indeed, they had only remained in Bassano for five months.

“ While I was drawing the old lady’s portrait, a tall, strong, very pleasant-looking woman of fifty or so came in and stood beside me. She wore the same dress as the Superiora, excepting that she had no cap, nor other covering for her wavy black hair, which was elaborately braided, and knotted up behind, in the fashion commonly followed by the contadine in this part of the country. She had very bright eyes, in which a smile seemed to have taken up its permanent abode, even when the rest of her face was serious. Her voice was soft,—there seems to be something in the atmosphere of that orphanage which makes everybody’s voice soft!—but her movements were rapid and energetic, and she evidently had a supply of vigour and spirit sufficient for half-a-dozen, at least, of average women. She was extremely interested in the progress of the picture, (which she said was as much like the

\* This is to me the most lovely and the most instructive fact I ever heard, in its witness to the relations that exist between man and the inferior intelligences of creation.

Superiora as anything could be that was *sitting still*), but it was rather a grievance to her that the old lady *would* be taken in her homely dress. ‘Come now, you *might* wear that other cap!’ she said, bending over the little fair Superiora, putting her strong arm very softly around her neck, and speaking coaxingly as if to a baby; then looking at me: ‘She has such a pretty cap, that I made up for her myself, and she will not wear it!’ ‘I wear it when I go out,’ said Signora Maria, ‘but I would rather have my likeness in the dress that I always wear at home.’ I, too, said that I would rather draw her just as she was. ‘I suppose you are right,’ said the younger woman, regretfully, ‘but she is so much prettier in that cap!’ I thought her quite pretty enough in the old blue cap, and kept on with my work. Meanwhile I asked some questions about the institution. Signora Maria said that it was founded in the last century by a good priest, D. Giorgio Pirani, and afterwards farther endowed by D. Marco Cremona, whom she had herself known in his old age. How old this D. Marco was she could not remember; a cast of his face, which she afterwards showed me, and which she told me was taken after his death, represented a very handsome, benevolent-looking man, of about seventy, but I imagine (judging from the rest of the conversation) that he must have been much older. She told me that the founder, D. Giorgio, having inherited considerable pro-

perty, and having no relations that needed it, had bought the land and three or four houses, which he had thrown into one ; and had given it all for poor orphan girls of Bassano.

"The place accommodates seventy-five girls and women, and is always full. Thirty centimes a day are allowed for the maintenance of each girl, and were probably sufficient in D. Giorgio's time, but times have changed since then. However, they do various kinds of work, principally of a religious or ecclesiastical nature, making priests' dresses, or artificial flowers for the altar, or wafers to be used at the communion ; besides sewing, knitting, and embroidery of all kinds ; and the women work for the children, and the whole seventy-five live together in one affectionate and united family. The old lady seemed very fond of her 'tose,' as she calls the girls, and said that they also loved her,—which I should think they would, for a more entirely loveable woman it would be hard to find.

"She has the delightful manners of an old-fashioned Venetian, full of grace, sweetness, and vivacity, and would think that she failed in one of the first Christian duties if she did not observe all the laws of politeness. She never once failed, during our rather frequent visits at the institution, to come downstairs to meet us, receiving me always at the outside door with a kiss on both cheeks ; and when we came away she would accompany us into the cortile, and stand there, taking leave, with

the sun on her white hair. When, however, she found this last attention made me rather uncomfortable, she desisted ; for her politeness being rather of the heart than of etiquette, she never fails in comprehending and considering the feelings of those about her.

"But to return to our conversation. The woman with the black, wavy hair, whose name was, as I found out, Annetta, remarked, with regard to the good Don Giorgio Pirani, that 'he died so young, poor man !' As it seemed he had accomplished a good deal in his life, I was rather surprised, and asked, 'How young ?' To which she replied, in a tone of deep compassion, 'Only seventy-five, poor man ! But then he had worn himself out with the care of the institution, and he had a great deal of trouble.' Annetta calculated age in the Bassano fashion ; in this healthy air, and *with the usually simple habits of life of the people*, longevity is the rule, and not the exception. The portrait of Don Giorgio's mother hangs beside his in the refectory, with an inscription stating that it was painted 'in the year of her age eighty-nine' ; also that her name was Daciana Pirani, and that she assisted her two sons, Giorgio and Santi, in their charitable work for the orphans. The picture itself bears the date 1774, and represents a fresh-coloured, erect, very pleasant-looking lady, with bright, black eyes, very plainly dressed in a long-waisted brown gown and blue apron, with a little dark-coloured cap, which time has rendered so indistinct

that I cannot quite make out the fashion of it. A plain handkerchief, apparently of fine white linen, is folded over her bosom, and her arms are bare to the elbows, with a fine Venetian gold chain wound several times around one of them,—her only ornament, excepting her little round earrings. She is standing by a table, on which are her crucifix, prayer-book, and rosary. The Superiora told me that when Don Giorgio was engaged in building and fitting up his asylum, sometimes at the table his mother would observe that he was absent and low-spirited, and had little appetite, at which she would ask him anxiously, ‘What ails you, my son?’ and he would reply, ‘I have no more money for my workmen.’ At this she always said, ‘Oh, if that is all, do not be troubled! I will see to it!’ And, rising from the table, she would leave the room, to return in a few minutes with a handful of money, sufficient for the immediate expenses. Don Giorgio himself must have had, if his portrait tells the truth, a singularly kind, sensible, and cheerful face, with more regular beauty than Don Marco Cremona, but less imposing, with dark eyes and white curling hair. Of Santi Pirani I could learn nothing, excepting that he was a priest, an excellent man, and his brother’s helper.

“But to return to what I was saying about the Bassano fashion of reckoning age. It is not long since a Bassano gentleman, himself quite a wonderful picture of vigorous health, was complaining to me that the health of the

city was not what it used to be. ‘Indeed,’ he said, with the air of one bringing forward an unanswerable proof of his assertion, ‘at this present time, among all my acquaintances, I know only one man past a hundred! My father knew several ; but now they all seem to drop off between eighty and ninety.’ And he shook his head sadly. I asked some questions about his centenarian friend, and was told that he was a poor man, and lived on charity. ‘We all give to him,’ he said ; ‘he always worked as long as he could, and at his age we do not think it ought to be expected of him.’

“As nearly as I can understand, people here begin to be considered elderly when they are about eighty, but those who die before ninety are thought to have died untimely. Signora Maria’s family had an old servant, by name Bartolo Mosca, who lived with them for seventy-two years. He entered their service at fourteen, and left it (for a better world, I hope) at eighty-six. He was quite feeble for some time before he died, and his master kept a servant expressly to wait upon him. A woman servant, Maria Cometa, died in their house of nearly the same age, having passed all her life in their service.

“I was much interested in observing Annetta’s behaviour to her Superiora ; it was half reverential, half caressing. I could hardly tell whether she considered the old lady as a patron saint or a pet child. Anxious to know what was the tie between them, I asked Annetta how long she had been in the place. She did

a little cyphering on her fingers, and then said, ‘Forty years.’ In answer to other questions, she told me that her father and mother had both died within a few weeks of each other, when she was a small child, the youngest of seven ; and her uncle, finding himself left with the burden of so large a family on his shoulders, had thought well to relieve himself in part by putting the smallest and most helpless ‘with the orphans.’ ‘*She* has been my mother ever since,’ she said, dropping her voice, and laying her hand on the little old lady’s shoulder. She added that some of her brothers had come on in the world, and had wished to take her home, and that she had gone at various times and stayed in their families, but that she had always come back to her place in the institution, because she could never be happy, for any length of time, anywhere else. I asked if the girls whom they took in were generally good, and repaid their kindness as they should do, to which the old lady replied, ‘Many of them do, and are a great comfort ; but others give us much trouble. What can we do.? We must have patience ; we are here on purpose.’ ‘Besides,’ said Annetta, cheerfully, ‘it would never do for us to have all our reward in this world ; if we did, we could not expect any on the other side.’

“The Superiora told me many interesting stories about the institution, and of the bequests that had been left to it by various Bassano families, of which the most valuable appeared to be *some land in the country with one or two*

*contadine houses*, where the girls are sent occasionally to pass a day in the open air and enjoy themselves. Many families had bequeathed furniture and pictures to the institution, so that one sees everywhere massive nutwood chairs and tables, carved and inlaid, all of old republican\* times. One picture, of which I do not recollect the date, but it is about two hundred years old, I should think, represents a young lady with fair curls, magnificently dressed in brocade and jewels, by name Maddalena Bernardi, who looks always as if wondering at the simple unworldliness of the life about her; and beside her hangs the last of her race (her son, I suppose, for he is much like her in feature; but no one knows now), a poor Franciscan frate, 'Who did a great deal for the orphans,' Signora Maria says. Next to the frate, between him and good Don Giorgio, she showed me a Venetian senator, all robe and wig, with a face like nobody in particular, scarlet drapery tossed about in confusion, and a background of very black thunder-clouds. 'This picture,' she said, 'was left us by the Doge Erizzo, and represents one of his family. He left us also a hundred and twenty staia of Indian corn and two barrels of wine yearly, and we still continue to receive them.' She showed me also a room where the floor was quite covered with heaps of corn, saying, 'I send it to be ground as we need it; but it will not last long, there are so many mouths!'

\* Old stately times, Francesca means, when Bassano and Castelfranco, Padua and Verona, were all as the sisters of Venice.

"During the many days that I visited Signora Maria, I noticed several things which seemed to me different from other orphan asylums which I have seen. To be sure I have not seen a great many; but from what little I have been able to observe, I have taken an impression that orphan girls usually have their hair cut close to their heads, and wear the very ugliest clothes that can possibly be obtained, and that their clothes are made so as to fit no one in particular. Also I think that they are apt to look dull and dispirited, with a general effect of being educated by machinery, which is not pleasant. Signora Maria's little girls, on the contrary, *are made to look as pretty as is possible* in the poor clothes, which are the best that can be afforded for them. Their cotton handkerchiefs are of the gayest patterns, their hair is arranged becomingly, so as to make the most of the light curls of one, or the heavy braids of another, and most of them wear little gold earrings. And if one speaks to them, they answer with a pleasant smile, and do not seem frightened. I do not think that the dear old lady keeps them under an iron rule, by any means. Another thing which I noticed was that while many of the younger children, who had been but a little while in the place, looked rather sickly, and showed still the marks of poverty and neglect, the older girls, who had been there for several years, had, almost without exception, an appearance of vigorous health. It was my good fortune to be there once on

washing-day, when a number of girls, apparently from fifteen to twenty years old, bare-armed (and some of them bare-footed), were hanging out clothes to dry in the cortile; and such a picture of health and beauty I have seldom seen, nor such light, strong, rapid movements, nor such evident enjoyment of their work.

"Next to the room where I did most of my work was a long narrow room where many of the women and elder girls used to work together. An inscription in large black letters hung on the wall, 'Silentium.' I suppose it must have been put there with an idea of giving an orderly conventional air to the place; perhaps it may have served that purpose, it certainly did no other! The door was open between us, and the lively talking that went on in that room was incessant. Once the old lady by my side called to them, 'Tose!' and I thought that she was calling them to order, but it proved that she only wanted to have a share in the conversation. When not sitting for her portrait she used to sew or knit, as she sat beside me. She could do beautiful mending, and never wore spectacles. She told me that she *had* worn them until a few years before, *when her sight had come back quite strong as in youth.*

"But I must allow, in speaking of my friends of the orphan asylum, that some of their religious observances are a little . . . peculiar. In the large garden, on the side where Signora Maria has her flower border ('We cannot afford much room for flowers,' Annetta

says, 'but they are the delight of the Superiora!') is a long walk under a canopy of grape-vines, leading to a niche where stands, under the thick shade, a large wooden Madonna of the Immaculate Conception. She is very ugly, and but a poor piece of carving; a stout, heavy woman in impossible drapery, and with no expression whatsoever. The seven stars (somewhat rusty and blackened by the weather) are arranged on a rather too conspicuous piece of wire about the head. The last time I saw her, however, she had much improved, if not in beauty or sanctity, at least in cleanliness of appearance, which Annetta accounted for by saying complacently: 'I gave her a coat of white paint myself, *oil* paint; so now she will look well for a long time to come, and the rain will not hurt her.' I observed that some one had placed a rose in the clumsy wooden hand, and that her ears were ornamented with little garnet earrings. Annetta said, 'The girls put together a few soldi and bought those earrings for the Madonna. They are very cheap ones, and I bored the holes in her ears myself with a gimlet.' Before this Madonna the girls go on summer afternoons to sing the litanies, and apparently find their devotion in no way disturbed by the idea of Annetta's tinkering. She seems to do pretty much all the carpentering and repairing that are wanted about the establishment, and is just as well pleased to 'restore' the Madonna as anything else. I was very sorry, at last, when the time

came to say good-bye to the peaceful old house and its inmates. The Superiora, on the occasion of her last sitting, presented me with a very pretty specimen of the girls' work—a small pin-cushion, surrounded with artificial flowers, and surmounted by a dove, with spread wings, in white linen, its shape, and even feathers, quite wonderfully represented by means of the peculiar starching process which I have tried to describe. I can only hope that the dear old lady may be spared to the utmost limit of life in Bassano, which would give her many years yet, for it is sad to think of the change that must come over the little community when she is taken away. She is still the life of the house; her influence is everywhere. She reminds me always of the beautiful promise, 'They shall yet bear fruit in old age.' Once I was expressing to her my admiration for the institution, and she said, 'It is a happy institution.' And so it is, but it is she who has made it so."

This lovely history, of a life spent in the garden of God, sums, as it illuminates, all that I have tried to teach in the series of letters which I now feel that it is time to close.

The "Go and do thou likewise," which every kindly intelligent spirit cannot but hear spoken to it, in each sentence of the quiet narrative, is of more searching and all-embracing urgency than any appeal I have

dared to make in my own writings. Looking back upon my efforts for the last twenty years, I believe that their failure has been in very great part owing to my compromise with the infidelity of this outer world, and my endeavour to base my pleading upon motives of ordinary prudence and kindness, instead of on the primary duty of loving God,—foundation other than which can no man lay. I thought myself speaking to a crowd which could only be influenced by visible utility; nor was I the least aware how many entirely good and holy persons were living in the faith and love of God as vividly and practically now as ever in the early enthusiasm of Christendom, until, chiefly in consequence of the great illnesses which, for some time after 1878, forbade my accustomed literary labour, I was brought into closer personal relations with the friends in America, Scotland, Ireland, and Italy, to whom, if I am spared to write any record of my life, it will be seen that I owe the best hopes and highest thoughts which have supported and guided the force of my matured mind. These have shown me, with lovely initiation, in how many secret places the prayer was made which I had foolishly listened for at the corners of the streets; and on how many hills which I had thought left desolate, the hosts of heaven still moved in chariots of fire.

But surely the time is come when all these faithful armies should lift up the standard of their Lord,—not

by might, nor by power, but by His spirit, bringing forth judgment unto victory. That they should no more be hidden, nor overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. If the enemy cometh in like a flood, how much more may the rivers of Paradise? Are there not fountains of the great deep that open to bless, not destroy?

And the beginning of blessing, if you will think of it, is in that promise, "Great shall be the peace of thy *children*." All the world is but as one orphanage, so long as its children know not God their Father; and all wisdom and knowledge is only more bewildered darkness, so long as you have not taught them the fear of the Lord.

Not to be taken out of the world in monastic sorrow, but to be kept from its evil in shepherded peace;—ought not this to be done for all the children held at the fonts beside which we vow, in their name, to renounce the world? Renounce! nay, ought we not, at last, to redeem?

The story of Rosy Vale is not ended;—surely out of its silence the mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing, and round it the desert rejoice, and blossom as the rose!

# F O R S C L A V I G E R A .

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# FORS CLAVIGERA.

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## INDEX

*TO THE VOLUMES FOR 1873 AND 1874.*

(SECOND THOUSAND.)

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*The larger black numerals indicate the number of the letter; the smaller numerals the pages.*

*Though the kind friends who have drawn up this and the earlier index are not content with their work, I believe it will be found entirely sufficient for its purposes, until the system of the whole is more developed. As soon as it has received anything like conclusive form I will index its subjects, in connection, myself.*

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ABSTRACT  
OF THE OBJECTS AND CONSTITUTION  
OF  
ST. GEORGE'S GUILD.

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The St. George's Guild consists of a body of persons who think, primarily, that it is time for honest persons to separate themselves intelligibly from knaves, announcing their purpose, if God help them, to live in godliness and honour, not in atheism and rascality: and who think, secondarily, that the sum which well-disposed persons usually set aside for charitable purposes, (namely, the tenth part of their income,) may be most usefully applied in buying land for the nation, and entrusting the cultivation of it to a body of well taught and well cared for peasantry.

For the teaching of these labourers, schools are to be erected, with museums and libraries in fitting places. The founders' views of what the education of a peasant should be are explained, *passim*, in 'Fors Clavigera.'

Persons entering the Guild promise, therefore, to give, if so much can be spared, a tenth of their income, or, at all events, whatever they can afford for general charity, to this special object. They undertake, further, to behave honestly and justly to all men, and to obey the Master of the Guild in all matters relating to the management of the affairs of the Guild.

The Master is elected by majority of the Guildsmen, and is at any time subject to deposition by majority of votes; but is absolutely uncontrolled in authority, while in office, over all the proceedings of the Guild.

The Guild will hold its land as other registered Societies do, in its own name; its capital will be vested in Trustees chosen by the Master and accepted by the Guildsmen. The Master is bound to furnish accounts of the affairs of the Guild, certified by the Trustees, half-yearly.

No one but the Master can incur any debt in the name of the Guild.

It is required by the Board of Trade, if the registration of the Guild is consented to by them, that a liability for a sum stated in the memorandum now before them, as not exceeding five pounds, should ex-

tend to the members of the Guild in the event of its affairs being wound up.

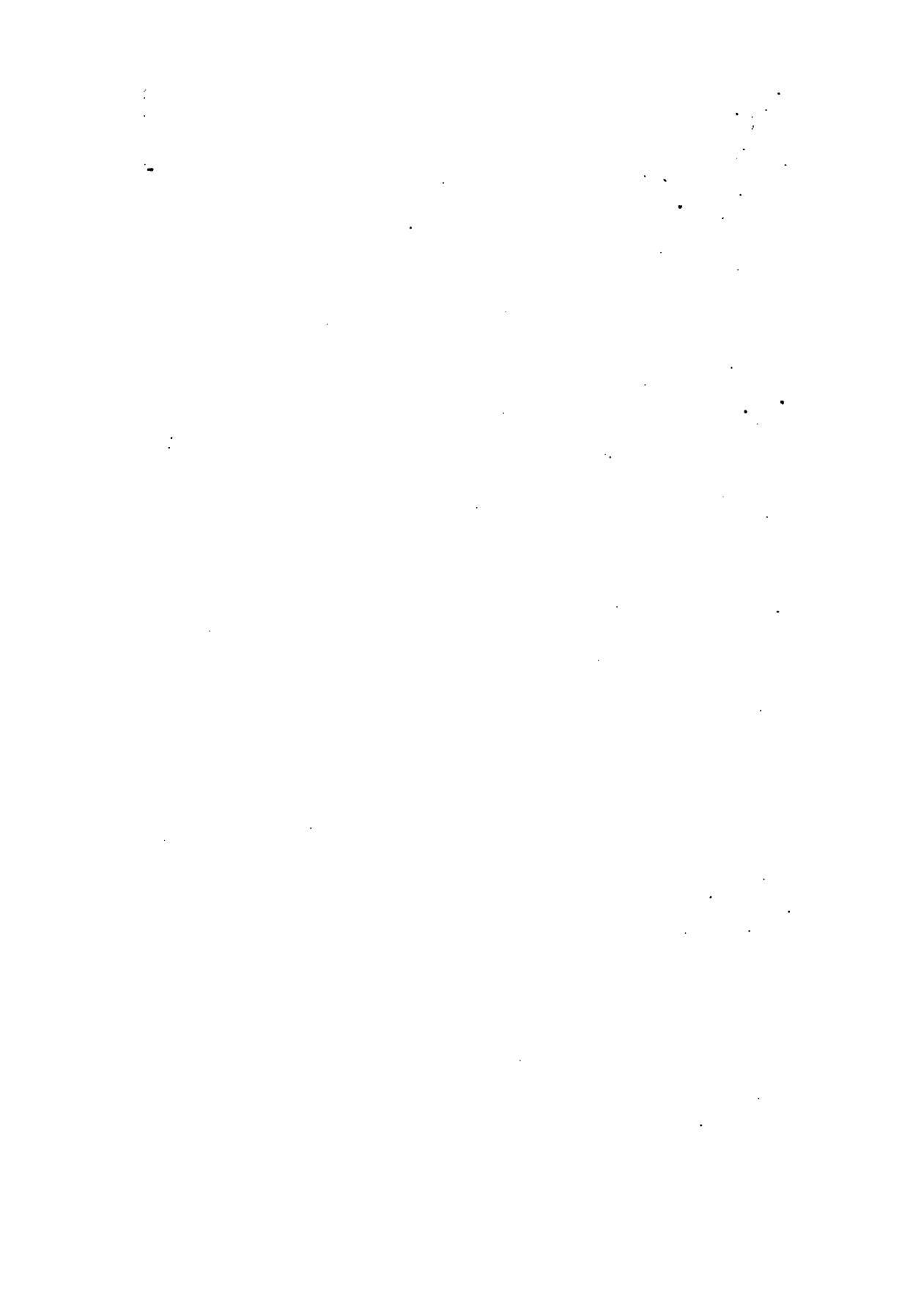
In the meantime, persons not wishing to incur any responsibility, or make any promises, yet interested in the success of the Guild, may practically become members of it merely by sending it such subscriptions as they please, and managing their own business with perfect honesty, and resolute benevolence.

General subscriptions may be either paid directly to the account of the Guild at the Union Bank, Chancery Lane, or to Mr. Egbert Rydings, Laxey, Isle of Man. Persons wishing to be enrolled in the Guild must read the instructions in Letters LV. and LVIII. of 'Fors Clavigera,' and then communicate with me, the present Master of the Guild, by letter addressed to Corpus Christi College, Oxford.

J. RUSKIN.

*20th December, 1877.*

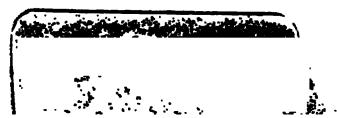












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